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Festival losing its sparkle?

Is the happiness of Spring Festival fading with the rise of China's wealth? Experts and Web warriors weigh in on the reasons.



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Street juggler on TV

A French juggler is traveling China to prepare for entertaining on the Spring Festival Gala.

Chasing dreams



Young people born in the 1980s have only known a nation that is ever-growing in wealth and influence.

Their Chinese Dream may be inspired by the American Dream, but to write it off as a pirate version would be a huge mistake.

The Chinese Dream is not about building something out of nothing, but about reclaiming the cultural roots lost during tumultuous decades when ideology trumped all.

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Capital's airport tightens security after Moscow blast

Police tightened security at Capital International Airport this week after a bombing at Moscow's Domodedovo airport killed 35 and injured 180 on Monday.

A vice minister ordered nationwide security checks at all transportation and traffic hubs as the country begins its peak travel season.

More police dogs have been deployed at the airport, including at luggage claim points, check-in counters and departure and arrival halls.

Police are monitoring surveillance cameras and the flow of passengers around the clock, an airport police officer told Xinhua.

More plainclothes police are on patrol, too, Hu Jinhui, a senior official at the Beijing International Airport Police Bureau, said.

"We ordered tighter security overnight to make sure the capital's airport is safe during the Chinese Lunar New Year travel period," Hu said.



Local airport has tightened security this week after the Moscow bombing.

CFP Photo

Police at the airport were already on high alert amid the

annual rush of travelers ahead of Spring Festival, which falls on February 3 this year.

About 208,000 travelers are expected to arrive at the airport every day during the travel season, from January 19 to February 27.

Passengers said it took longer

to board planes at the airport Tuesday, but that the tightened security measures did not cause noticeable inconvenience.

"We waited half an hour in the plane before we were allowed to disembark. It is OK if the delay was for security reasons," said Zhuang Zenan, a business trav-

eler arriving from Hangzhou.

The government condemned the Moscow airport bombing and offered its condolences to the victims.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei said China supports the Russian government's measures against terrorism.

Deputy Minister of Public Security Huang Ming on Tuesday ordered a thorough security overhaul at airports, railways, subways, sea ports and long distance bus stations around the country.

Huang ordered police to close all security loopholes and to closely monitor disputes and grudges that could lead to unrest.

China has had its share of terrorist threats, especially in northwest Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, which borders Afghanistan, Pakistan and other central Asian states.

The last bombing occurred on August 19, 2010, in Aksu City. It left eight people dead, including the two attackers, and 15 injured.

On March 7, 2008, a 19-year-old female Uyghur attempted to bomb the China Southern Airlines flight she boarded from Urumqi heading for Beijing. Her attempt was foiled.

(Xinhua)

City eager to rein in C-section abuse

By Han Manman

The municipal government is looking to control the city's high cesarean section (C-section) rate by encouraging vaginal delivery as part of the city's 12th Five-Year Plan (2011-2015), the Beijing Women's Federation (BWF) said Monday.

Officials at BWF said most mothers in the city have been misinformed that children born by C-section are more intelligent and that the procedure is less painful, leading many to opt for the surgical procedure.

The federation said it will cooperate with related health departments in the city to educate pregnant mothers about the safety of vaginal delivery and encourage them to choose it when giving birth.

BWF did not say how it hopes to control the rate in time to meet its five-year target.

C-sections are the most common method of delivery in China, accounting for half of all births, by far the highest rate worldwide according to the WHO.

Zhang Weiyuan, a surgeon at the Beijing Obstetrics Gynecology Hospital, said his hospital delivered 50 percent of its infants by C-section, and that abuse of the procedure was wasting medical resources.

He said the cost of natural delivery is around

2,000 yuan, while a C-section costs 8,000 yuan, thus creating financial motivation for some hospitals to recommend C-sections.

Since some women postpone their baby plans for a career, an influx of older mothers may also contribute to the high C-section rate. Better nutrition and living conditions result in bigger infants and overweight women, who may have difficulties during vaginal delivery, according to the Municipal Bureau of Health website.

"A few women also said they believed C-section was less risky," Zhang said.

Surgery may injure adjacent organs — especially the bowels, bladder and attached blood vessels of the mother — Zhang said. There is also an increased risk of infection and of blood clots in the legs, which may break away to cause a pulmonary embolism.

C-sections result in re-hospitalization twice as often as vaginal delivery.

"Surgical delivery should only be used when complications develop during birth that put the mother or baby's life at risk," he said.

"Every pregnant woman wants a healthy baby, so it is important to talk to your obstetrician to understand the options. The better informed you are, the safer the delivery will be," Zhang said.

Revised rules to end most forced demolitions

By Han Manman

The central government issued new rules to end forced demolitions amid an increasing number of deadly property disputes.

The rules target disputes over house expropriation and demolition and strive to give equal consideration to both public interests and the rights of property owners, according to a statement issued by the Legislative Affairs Office of the State Council and the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development.

It stated that neither violence nor coercion can be used to force homeowners to leave. Nor could illegal measures such as cutting off their access to water and electricity.

The rules also banned land developers from being directly involved in demolition and relocation procedures.

"Links between demolitions and developers' business interests have long been an important element fueling land disputes," said Shen Kui, a law professor at Peking University. "By minimizing business interests ... the new regulations could reduce these types of incidents," he said.

The local government will be in charge of land expropriation and compensation. It has the option to authorize other non-profit orga-

nizations to take over this work, according to the regulations.

If authorities cannot reach an agreement with residents over expropriations or compensation for their property, then the demolition can only proceed pending court approval.

The previous rules had authorized local governments to enforce demolitions at will, Shen said.

"The regulation does not say that there will be no more forced demolitions, because there might be cases where homeowners abuse their rights to act as profiteers," Shen said.

However, when the local government has a stake in the process, such as when it is in charge of expropriation, a check and balance from the courts could reduce the number of arbitrary decisions, he said.

Compensation was a major concern when drafting the new regulation. The new regulations require that homeowners be paid a compensation no lower than the market price of a similar property at the time of expropriation.

The previous regulation provided that compensation for demolished home could be determined through government-led price appraisals, Shen said.

He said the new regulation may minimize the frequency of

deadly property, but that courts and local people's congresses should independently and effectively exercise their authority to review and supervise the local governments' expropriation practices.

Land disputes have become a serious social problem in recent years as some local officials and developers seek to cash in on the nation's boom, sometimes at the expense of homeowners' rights.

According to figures released by the China Academy of Social Sciences, a top government think tank, fights over land account for 65 percent of all rural "mass conflicts," and the problem is prevalent in cities as well.

Last October, demolition workers broke into a house slated for demolition that belonged to a 54-year-old man in Shanxi Province. The owner, who had earlier refused to leave, was pulled from the house and beaten to death, Xinhua reported.

The new rules, which came into effect last Friday, replaced 2001 regulations on administration of demolition and relocation in cities. It was first reviewed at a State Council executive meeting in December 2007. Later, public opinion was twice sought in 2010 after revisions had been made to the regulations.

P2P leader forced to shut down service

By Wang Yu

Verycd.com, one of China's first and most popular peer-to-peer (P2P) download sites, closed its movie and music services last weekend. The move was seen as the sign of the government's newfound zeal for enforcing copyrights.

Last Saturday night, users found that the movie and music channels of Verycd were closed without announcement. News spread online via microblogs, and a day later, the channels returned with all download links removed.

Software, games and books remain available on the site.

Opened in 2003, the site was built around the eMule file sharing client. The site does not carry files, but offers links which spawn into the program. During the past few years, the site grew to include links for music, movies, software, magazines and educational materials.

At the end of 2009, BTChina, another popular BT download site, was closed as part of the government's campaign to shut down illegal downloads. Verycd survived.

However, the site has never been licensed to distribute videos and music online.

Huang Yimeng, its founder,

said he began planning the transformation of Verycd a year ago. With the government's new policies to support Internet copyright protection, it became hard for Verycd to survive without ending up in court.

Huang denied rumors that Verycd would be turning into a social networking site. He said that user's habits have shifted from downloading to streaming media. He said this is why the site's movie, music and TV channels now link users to other legal video sharing sites such as PPlive.com.

"I've been a user of Verycd since 2003. I think the site has

given users like me a lot during the past seven years. However, I understand the importance of copyright protection. The site is wise to change itself," said Vincent Wen, a network engineer.

Hong Bo, an Internet analyst, said it is hard for a pure P2P sharing website to find a practical business model.

However, as most overseas video and music content is still prohibited from being imported, such sites rise up to meet netizen demand. He suggested that the best way to combat them may be for the government to open its doors to more legal media.



A biological fertilizer project wins the top Social Creative Award.

Photo by Zhang Congzhi

Competition finds new solutions for social problems

By Liang Meilan

The final round of the second College Students Entrepreneurship Challenge ended Tuesday at China Youth University for Political Sciences.

Eight of the more than 200 student teams from 10 universities competed in the finals. The newly created Social Creative Award went to a biological fertilizer improvement and promotion project designed by students from Shantou University.

Team leader Su Caihong, a senior studying biotechnology, said he was inspired by society's growing awareness of the dangers of chemical fertilizers.

"They cause extensive damage to the rural environment, hardening soil and causing it to tire. They also harm the people who eat the end products," Su said.

Su collaborated with two classmates to provide a feasible alternative: a composite biological fertilizer made by mixing bacterial manure and farm manure.

"It even costs less to produce than chemical fertilizers because the raw materials are already in abundant supply throughout the countryside," she said.

Su's team is currently working to improve the technology and promote its use in rural areas.

Standing Committee member of Cheung Kong Design Research Center Zhou Lening said a highlight of this year's contest was that many projects were concerned with social problems like pollution and unemployment.

Creative projects to grow vegetables on rooftops and compile books of stories collected from senior citizens were highly praised by judges.

Projects that provided a solution to social problems in health care, environmental protection, education, poverty and employment were given extra marks.

The challenge was conducted by Cheung Kong Design Research Center and Know About Business Entrepreneurship Education organization (KAB). This year's competition began in September with preliminary selections.

Award winners will be sent to attend MaD (Make a Difference), a high-level international creative conference in Hong Kong.

Oldest bathhouse applies for World Heritage status



Bathing fans at Beijing's last bathhouse Shuang Xingtang is holding a New Year's gala in the bathhouse.

CFP Photo

Beijing's last bathhouse, Shuang Xingtang, is facing demolition and relocation. To save the site and preserve local bathing culture, it has applied to be included on the List of World Heritage.

Shuang Xingtang, located in Nanyuan, Fengtai District, has a history going back 90 years. It still has its traditional layout and large water tank despite most of its surrounding homes having been leveled.

"It's hard to say when Shuang Xingtang's turn will come. If we are accepted into the List of World Heritage, then the old bathhouse will

be preserved and protected as treasure," said Xiong Zhi-zhong, the owner.

Though the price of commodities continues to climb, Shuang Xingtang maintains its 5-yuan admission. It has a dedicated following of bathers who also come for scraping and fire cupping treatments, tea samples and games of Chinese chess.

Local residents Zhang and Tan said they moved to the area from Fangshan district and the former Chongwen district so they could visit every day.

"I rented a house near Shuang Xingtang for 500

yuan per month and at 5 yuan for admission the bath only costs me 150 yuan per month. It was a worthwhile investment," Tan said.

"But at only 5 yuan, even if we host 200 people per day it cannot pay the cost of rent, utilities and labor," Xiong said. "We are helping to advertise time-honored brands and develop other businesses like karaoke, massage and fitness."

The bath has fans in all strata of the workforce. Some bathers are retired cadres and others former pedicab drivers.

"When you're naked and talking, there is no status,"

Tan said. In Shuang Xingtang, topics range from traffic jams to the North Korea nuclear debate.

Last Saturday, bathing fans met for a New Year's gala in the old bathhouse. They constructed a humble stage out of deck chairs and white bath towels and performed naked or half-naked.

Attendees said it might be their last chance to meet up. Most were pessimistic about a future without the bath house, and said they hoped the application for the List of World Heritage would pass.

(By Pang Xiaoqiao)

Deliverymen's high pay depends on hard work

By Liang Meilan

Showing off or discussing salaries is popular on the Web. Recently, a Sina blogger claiming to be an express delivery man boasted that he earns 15,000 yuan per month. Some responses questioned his honesty, some were envious and others were furious.

The e-commerce market has created a massive boom in logistics, and express delivery is seeing the bulk of that vigorous growth. Delivery men are in short supply, and in many big cities their earnings can far exceed the local average.

But that success may not be all good news for the workers.



Spring Festival is the busiest time of the year for express deliverymen.

Li Xi/CFP

Salary gap

Shunfeng Express is No.1 among China's hundreds of local express companies. In the industry, the company is well known for its rapid delivery, considerate service and high price.

Xu Yong, chief adviser of China Express Consulting Company, said that research has shown that the average salary for a Shunfeng delivery man ranges from 2,000 to 4,000 yuan.

"A handful of them can earn more than 5,000 yuan, and it's not unheard of for them to earn more than 10,000 yuan per month," Xu said.

Huang Ruyi, 33, has been delivering for Shunfeng for four years. Now earning 5,000 yuan per month, he lived with his wife in a

rented house in Tongzhou District.

In the capital where some graduates earn less than 2,000 yuan, Huang, a high school graduate from the Hebei Province countryside, seems lucky.

"I had a hard life when I join the company in 2006. I was earning only 700 yuan per month based on my 200-yuan base salary and 500-yuan commission," Huang said.

Today, Shunfeng delivery men earn a base pay of 1,500 yuan. The difference in their salaries depends on how many express deliveries they handle.

Commissions vary between express companies. Larger operations like Shunfeng pay a commission of more than 1.5 yuan for each package.

"I earn 3 yuan delivering



A deliveryman eats lunch on the way to send his parcel on time. CFP

one item. It is much better than my friends working for small companies who get 0.2 yuan," Huang said.

"So if you want more money, move faster and win more clients," he said.

Huang's work day starts at

8:30 am and continues until 6:30 pm. On most days, he delivers 30 packages. During peak seasons like Mid-Autumn Festival and Spring Festival he can see more than 200 packages per day.

But in this labor-intensive industry, workers like Huang have

to shoulder increasing pressure.

Another significant factor contributing to the salary gap is the work area. People in charge of "hot destinations" like Zhongguancun in Haidian District and the Financial Street tend to earn more.

"Working region is distributed randomly. I am relatively lucky to cover two business communities in Xibahe area on East Third Ring. Some of my colleagues working in Zhongguancun get 11,000 yuan per month. Besides, the huge amount of mail goes to a relatively small area, so they have a good opportunity to meet repeat clients," said Huang.

In Shunfeng, a delivery man gets a 3 yuan commission for home-service mail to be sent: two times more than a delivery.



A deliveryman takes a nap during the night work. Hu Yuanyong/CFP

Rising pay a trend

Huang's salary has grown quickly. In 2010, his average pay of 5,000 increased 50 percent over the year before.

His story is a miniature of the express industry, and that growth is linked to e-commerce and elevated consumption ability.

Gong Tao, logistics director of Taobao, said that each day trades on his site generate

700,000 new mail.

"That number will triple this year," he said.

But the labor pool is far from strong enough to support this growing business. One of the major reasons is personnel loss.

"The intensive job is too much for many young people born in the 1980s and 1990s. Many of them would rather go to a second- or third-tier city to find easier work. The turnover

in some companies is as high as 50 percent," said Xu Yong from China Express Consulting.

Faced with this labor shortage, express companies are raising their pay to retain quality employees.

"The labor cost in the express industry has grown from 10 to 30 percent. The average wage of a delivery man will go up 20 percent this year, and may double by 2014," Xu said.

Life still hard

That pay is enough to attract some tougher youngsters. Hou Yixiao, a 21-year-old from Hebei Province, is among them.

Unable to pay his tuition, Hou was forced out of high school and turned to working as a vegetable vendor. When he heard from his friends that deliverymen in the capital earn several thousand yuan per month, he decided to come seek a dream job at an express company.

Most deliverymen are like

Hou — young migrant workers with education levels below high school graduation. They are representatives of the second generation of migrant workers.

Though they earn more money than other migrant workers who are in construction or catering, they too struggle with life in the big city.

Hou works eight hours a day and has one day off each week. To earn more, he works late helping the company sort out its packages for the next day. That work has taken a toll on his health, and

Hou faints easily in hot weather.

But he never goes to the hospital.

"I don't need to see a doctor. It is just a symptom of anemia. I know the cure: candy. So I always eat a package of candy in summer," he said.

Earning 4,000 yuan a month, Hou is able to rent a two-room apartment he shares with his colleagues.

After work, his major pastime is playing online games at an Internet cafe. Several times a month, he goes to meet his

friends and eat out.

But that lifestyle doesn't allow him to save any money to send home.

His network of friends is quite limited. Most are either people from his hometown or colleagues. Their entertainment is limited to online games, shopping and loafing around. While they dream of city life, they have little communication with city people.

"Sometimes I feel I'll always be stuck as a low-class worker, especially when I have ill-tempered clients shouting at me,"

he said.

The miserable workload also keeps many deliverymen stuck as perpetual bachelors. Hou hopes to eventually earn enough to become his own boss so he will have the free time necessary for family life. He plans to get a loan from his family and use it to buy a working area from his boss and start his own delivery service.

"The industry is really promising, and I believe I'll be able to earn a lot more very soon," he said.

Chasing the Chinese Dream

'80 Chinese shifts values on nationalism

Before Chinese president Hu Jintao headed to the US for a state visit last Tuesday, *The International Herald Tribune* (IHT) tried to explore what drives Chinese people, especially those born after 1980 who will soon be moving into positions of influence and wealth.

China's economy is roughly a third the size of the US' \$15 trillion, but based on high growth rates in China and low growth in the US, the *Economist* magazine estimates a shift in economic dominance may come as early as 2019. Goldman Sachs guesses 2027.

IHT correspondent Didi Kirsten Tatlow interviewed a group of '80s youth – born in the decade after China's economic and social liberalization began – and asked what they think of the Chinese Dream and the future relationship between China and the US. She wrote an article titled "Nationalistic and Chasing the Chinese Dream."



Young Chinese people on Tian'anmen Square wave Chinese flags during a memorial for victims of the Wenchuan earthquake.

Bao Fan/IC Photo

Ge Yang, a 26-year-old editor at Umiwi.com, a Beijing-based website for and about the '80s generation, said the majority of people in her generation – especially those in big cities and with decent jobs – don't envy the US and its material wealth.

"We have all the material things here that America has, like iPhones, which are really, really loved here," she said. "We can get the best of all their goods, so that's not an issue."

"But we can't do what they do culturally: produce things like *Tom and Jerry* cartoons, *Transformers*, *Avatar*, *Inception*, iPhones, Barbies. America has things we really, really like, on a cultural level."

This generation of youth is the first to grow up under China's one-child policy. They happily admit they are prone to selfishness. Yet, generally, they are also engaged in soul-searching and conscious of their historical mission in pointing their country toward a better future and away from poverty of the past.

After the tradition-smashing politics of the first three decades of the People's Republic and three further decades of rapid economic growth that has destroyed some of the country's environment and cultural heritage, China's young adults are searching for values and moral meaning, said Ge, who studied Chinese literature at Beijing Normal University.

"We are not ideological. We are patriotic, we are nationalistic. But then, who doesn't love their country?" she said. "We're not poor anymore, we enjoy life. We want a life with quality, with meaning and not just a working life like our parents had."

Ge's work at the website brings her into daily contact with a broad range of opinions among the '80s generation. She predicts the next three decades will see people here pursuing the Chinese Dream.

"This is a big topic here right now," she said. "It's inspired by the American Dream, but different. Americans say you can

build anything out of nothing. We believe that you can love your family and your country and return to your cultural roots, such as Confucius. So much was lost in the last 60 years."

"We want to rejuvenate our values and find our soft power as a nation," she said.

Dong Mushi, 29, a project manager at a state-owned electricity company in Beijing who has never been to the US, says he is far more positive about the US than his parents, who, he says, see things through a political prism.

"My parents say the US is trying to control the world with democratic ideology, but I don't think so. I don't like to judge any nation based only on politics. I prefer to see people's real feelings about living in a country," he said. "To me, the US is a country with the most advanced modern culture, a generous place where everyone, no matter where you're from, can find a comfortable life, and I like that."

Yang Li, 30, a law graduate from the southwestern

city of Chongqing, left China in 2003 and now works in an administrative job at a Swedish university. Both she and her husband believe the US is trying to slow or even stop China's rise – a common belief among Chinese – but say that's understandable.

"They're using their ideology to lead the Western world," Yang said. "That's normal in the economy and in global politics, and China would do the same. I can totally understand this and don't think they're doing anything wrong."

Yang, Dong and Ge all agree that just because China may overtake the US in GDP doesn't mean it'll feel like a rich place. China's population is so big that they expect that on a per capita basis it will remain a developing country for a very long time.

"Look at last year when China overtook Japan, it didn't make us feel we were better than Japan. Our average income is still far below theirs," Ge said.

(Agencies)

Expert's view

The nationalism of '80s generation's isn't hostile

By Li Zhixin

Chinese of the '80s are gaining more and more attention as people expect China to become more open, confident, tolerant and responsible when people from this generation step into leading roles.

As a major consumption group, they have power to dominate and change the Chinese market according to their interests. They are also very tech-savvy, having grown up with the Internet.

Public opinion of this generation was negative just a few years ago. They were perceived as self-centered and spoiled.

It wasn't until the Wenchuan Earthquake and Olympic Games in 2008 that they began to stand out as symbols of nationalism and patriotism, showing strong solidarity and responsibility when they were called to duty: as rescuers in Sichuan Province and as Olympic volunteers in Beijing.

The generation has a strong national identity – not the same thing as nationalism – and are not narrow-minded. It is unlikely they will seek conflicts with other nations. Their nationalism is based on gaining the respect they deserve and fair treatment on the international stage.

In addition, this generation is more reasonable than most of their predecessors and can scrutinize international and domestic events with a more critical eye.

China's rapid economic development has made the '80 generation more confident, and that has tamped down its nationalism, making it appear less hostile to foreigners.

The group has begun to think about the future of the country seriously and become aware of traditional Chinese culture and values. They are more tolerant and invested in seeing the sustainable development of the country rooted in its own history and culture.

Although people of this generation still have to face many challenges and problems, their confidence for the future and persistent efforts to revive Chinese civilization and realize the Chinese Dream will bring the country to a new and better level that will also benefit the whole world.

– Zhang Yiwu, deputy director of Cultural Resources Research Center of Peking University

Related

The connotation of Chinese Dream

On a national level, the Chinese Dream is to create the maximum amount of comfort for all Chinese people, giving them the opportunities needed to achieve self-worth and freedom. Also implied is the development of the political system, social environment and natural environment.

The Chinese Dream has three phases that might be summarized as: raising the self (self-improvement through virtue); contributing to the community (do as you would have done to you); and embracing the natural (man is an integral part of nature).

This is a humane and sustainable dream in accordance with the values and civilization of China: pursuing individual self-realization, enjoying inner peace, balance and calm; interacting with the community in search of harmony and sense of honor; and coexisting with the natural environment, respecting and protecting nature.

Aging China: crisis or opportunity?

Elderly population offers silver lining for investors

China faces an aging crisis. The country had 169 million people older than 60 at the end of 2009; 12 percent of the population. The figure is expected to reach 250 million by 2025 and 400 million by 2050.

An aging population brings greater pension pressure, increasing medical expenses and a heavier burden for young taxpayers. However, looming businesses are starting to tap the rapidly expanding senior citizens' market. They may be sitting on the country's new boom industry.

Retired professor Chen Chongyu and his wife Liu Zhenjuan dreamed of coming back to China from their daughter's home in France, but until last year the couple had nowhere to go.

That changed when they found Cherish-Yearn, an upscale retirement community on the fringes of Shanghai and a pioneer in catering to the country's prosperous elderly.

"Every year we would come back to China and we would visit retirement homes. But we couldn't find anything," said 79-year-old Chen, a history professor who specialized in the French revolution.

"When we finally found this place we felt we could return."

China's traditional model of children living with their elderly parents is under siege, thanks to 30 years of the one-child policy and rapid urban migration.

Leaving their daughter's home in France, Liu, 74, and Chong paid 690,000 yuan (\$104,545) to move into a three-room apartment on Cherish-Yearn's beautifully sculpted campus.

An annual fee of 88,000 yuan covers basic medical and cleaning services, and various activities.

The country had 169 million people over 60 by the end of 2009, or 12 percent of the population. That number will jump to 250 million people by 2025.

And their spending power is rising. Chinese seniors command



Businesses are just starting to tap the rapidly expanding senior citizens' market.

Zhang Hao/CFP Photo

a total 300 billion to 400 billion yuan in annual disposable income, according to Kunal Sinha, chief knowledge officer at marketing firm Ogilvy & Mather in Shanghai.

That will rise to 5 trillion yuan over the next three decades.

Hypermarkets at the forefront

Hypermarkets in the country's megacities have caught on to the fact that seniors are the main grocery shoppers in the family, sending morning buses and offering discounts to lure them in.

But apart from health supplement makers, few industries are working to attract their money.

Still, in recent years there's been a sudden uptick in investment in senior homes and so-called "silver towns."

Yoko Marikawa, a Japanese consultant specializing in the seniors industry, says almost 50 of her Chinese clients have opened or are planning to open retirement communities in the country. Their

total investments are expected to be between 15-25 billion yuan.

Real estate opportunity

The country's biggest property developer, Vanke, is also launching four retirement projects, including one in Beijing.

"In many of the older Vanke developments, about 30 percent of the residents are elders living alone - empty nesters. So we're looking into different ways of meeting their needs," said chairman Wang Shi, who himself is 59 and an active mountaineer.

Vanke's new retirement developments will be rental properties, marking a new business model for the company.

Retirement communities are still a rarity in China, and upscale ones even more so. Less than 2 percent of the country's elderly live in nursing homes, said Ninie Wang, a government advisor on aging and founder of Pinetree Services, which provides services to elders at their homes. (Agencies)

Analyst

Industry seeks support from gov and business sector

By Huang Daohen

The market for the aging population is the next big thing for the country, said Lillian Qi, a Nielsen analyst specializing in the seniors industry.

Businesses that tap the country's elderly are seeing increasing growth in recent years as more people join the ranks of the retired, she said. "They are living longer than their predecessors and the market is growing much faster than most people realize."

But Qi said both the government and the business sector have a lot of work to do if they are going to appeal to seniors.

In China, policy is always seen as the weather vane for investments. Qi said the government should implement policies to create an environment that supports industries that target the elderly.

Currently, overseas funds are prohibited from being directly involved in retirement projects, and foreign firms are still waiting for the government to issue standards on senior-related investments.

"Investors don't know

which standards to follow. They are afraid if they invest in the services now and later the government changes its standards, they will lose out. They could end up having to rebuild or change some facilities," Qi said.

For investors who want to take a share of this market, Qi said more effort should be made to produce products elderly people need and want.

Investors used to put more emphasis on housing projects, health care and medical, but elderly people also need entertainment.

Qi predicted a growing demand for senior-oriented entertainment since so many people have both the time and money needed to enjoy it. "Toys and tourism are two of the fields that are worth exploring," she said.

He also said investors should start looking for new ways to stimulate elder people's desire to spend. Creating senior-only special offers and senior-targeted advertisements might make them recognize new avenues for their spending, she said.

Western Union says growth driven by cultural demands

By Huang Daohen

The global money-transfer agency Western Union has stepped up efforts to integrate with local culture in the China market, its second largest recipient of remittances.

In January 22, the company unveiled the world's biggest hongbao, a traditional red envelope, at a Chinese New Year celebration in Fuzhou, Fujian Province, the hometown of many overseas workers.

The record-breaking envelope, measuring 1-by-2.2 meters and certified by the World Record Association, was created to underscore the age-old Chinese tradition of giving cash wrapped in colored paper to loved ones during Spring Festival, said Drina Yue, managing director and senior vice pres-

ident of Western Union Asia Pacific.

A recent Nielsen report sponsored by Western Union said hongbao still plays an important role in modern China, despite the country's growing prosperity.

Chinese people, especially those overseas, still see cash as the most appropriate gift for close family members to maintain connections, the report said.

Li Furen, who returned from the US, agreed. Li said he used to send hongbao back to friends and relatives when he was working abroad. "It is a chance to express love and best wishes," she said.

Yue said he expected that during this Lunar New Year, Chinese from home and abroad will give more than 1

billion in hongbao.

"China always has been an important market for Western Union, considering the volume of the country's overseas migrants," Yue said. Last year, the trans-border remittances market in China reached \$50 billion.

The company had agreements with nine local banks and was available at 25,000 locations in China as of the end of 2009.

"We now cover all the provinces, and that means we are able to help overseas migrants quickly send their hongbao to their loved ones," Yue said.

Though overseas remittances are still the bulk of the company's business, Yue said there has also been increase in outbound remittances from

Chinese students, travelers and entrepreneurs exploring the overseas markets.

Western Union has been recording double-digit growth in the Chinese market, Yue said. The figure for 2009 is 17 percent, Yue said.

The company is working on adding more electronic channels for money transfer, aside from its current bank outlets, Yue said. Direct transfer to bank accounts is its top priority, since China had 2.2 billion registered bank accounts as the end of last year.

Yue said the company will leverage its emerging technologies like online money transfers and mobile money transfers. Burgeoning Internet users and cell phone users are the potential future, she said.



Yue unveils the biggest hongbao. Photo by Huang Lixin

Looming festival crisis

Is the Lunar New Year culture fading away?



For many young people, traditional performances during the Spring Festival are more like ads to attract consumers.
CFP Photo

By Li Zhixin/Zhao Hongyi

With Spring Festival coming up, many families are busy preparing gifts and dinners for family reunions with their children and relatives. But despite the festive spirit, many young people in China are complaining they no longer feel the atmosphere of Spring Festival.

With rising living standards come rising workloads, and it seems a result of that is lessened interest in taking time off for traditional Chinese holidays, including Mid-Autumn Festival and Dragon Boat Festival.

Ya Lan, an officer at a French company's Beijing branch, said she is overwhelmed with work that needs to be done before the holiday. "Spring Festival is only a holiday in our mind," she said.

"I always remember the old habits of preparing for Spring Festival in the 1950s and 1960s," Yang Yu, a professor at Peking University, said. Chinese New Year's was festive "even though life was hard."

Yang said he will always recall how he

made snowmen, set off fireworks and made lanterns. "But that has gone away," he said.

It doesn't help that Beijing has hardly seen a flake of snow all winter.

Yang said while it may not feel as festive these days as before, he still has hope.

"Look at the number of people going back to their hometowns for family reunions during Spring Festival," he said. "This holiday is part of our blood."

Expert's view

While Spring Festival is losing its attraction here, it is gaining traction with people in other parts of the world. In many East Asian countries, it remains one of the most important festivals in the year.

Even in Senegal, Africa, local TV channels broadcast Spring Festival programs from CCTV.

The festival cannot disappear from our life. We have to do something to improve, reform and enrich the ways we celebrate the festival.

First, I think that we need to comb the culture and make the celebrations more simple. Only in that way can people like it, accept it and follow it.

Second, we should utilize modern technology and tastes, such as Internet greetings. We could make a cartoon to introduce the holiday to young children.

Third, we need to emphasize the important parts of the festival, such as family reunions and festival songs.

Fourth, we need to market festival products like red lanterns, festival foods, gifts and fireworks.

Last, we should understand that traditional culture dictates Spring Festival represent natural principles, harmony, peace and patience.

— Zhang Xiaolan, senior editor, China Culture Daily

Comment

Spring Festival holiday is too short

We only get a seven-day leave for Spring Festival, and we have to spend two or three days journeying home and coming back. And our entire holiday is usually spent visiting relatives and friends. It's hard to find time or energy to participate in any other celebratory activities.

— Meng Jie, secretary in a foreign trade corporation
What we lack is peace of mind

Even if the holiday is prolonged, the Chinese New Year's festive atmosphere is weak because we fail to put our minds at rest during the holiday. Especially anxious are those from rural areas: in the city, they are homesick; back home, they keep thinking about job security.

Why overseas Chinese people can make every Spring Festival a big cultural feast is because they live and work in peace and

contentment and want to express their cultural nostalgia. If our migrant workers can also lead a better life, Spring Festival culture will soon be rejuvenated.

— Duan Qigang, editor at a press house

The Spring Festival's glamour not weak in terms of food

Spring Festival is the greatest culinary event on the planet. People eat out on Chinese New Year's Eve and the ready meal concept is threatening to make its way even to stay-in diners. But talking to my colleagues, I was happy to know that many of them will still help their mothers and grandmothers cook a variety of dishes they don't have the time or inclination to do at other times of the year. Therefore, Spring Festival can be regarded as the ultimate safeguard for China's family culinary traditions.

— Grayson Clark, an international consultant

The festive spirit continues to thrive in people's hearts

The rating of CCTV's Spring Festival Gala shows it has become a vital part of New Year's Eve celebrations in China, though I've heard different opinions about this program.

The Chinese have realized the importance of traditional customs and try to observe them, particularly during Spring Festival. Many people take their families and friends to temple fairs during the Spring Festival to watch acrobatic performances or savor delicious snacks or buy souvenirs. The atmosphere in such places is really festive. Of course, there are a large number of Chinese who also prefer going abroad during the holiday.

People's values are diverse, so we cannot say doing certain things in certain ways is the best way

to celebrate Spring Festival. But since in every society holidays are a precious time for families, couples and friends to reaffirm and strengthen their relationship, wherever or in whichever way they celebrate them, the festive spirit will continue to thrive in their hearts.

— Hiroyuki Kojima, deputy director of Japan Foundation

The festive spirit is kidnapped by gift-giving culture in official circles

The Spring Festival is the best chance in the year to give gifts to and enhance rapport with superiors and business partners, which sometimes influence one's luck in official circles and business in the coming year. So many people gradually become indifferent on the festive spirit but attach more importance on how to please their superiors and business partners.

— Jing Jing, bank clerk

Community service net for people with learning disabilities needed

By Chu Meng

The latest statistics on the China Disabled Persons' Federation's website, current as of 2006, show that China has 10 million mentally disabled people. Only 1.5 million of them are able to acquire vocational skills.

There is no safety net for the mentally disabled. The system prods them toward dead-end existences: uneducated, unemployed, even homeless.

Hundreds of grassroots NGOs across the country aim to provide daily care and vocational training to help the mentally disabled, but many of these organizations struggle to get accredited and operate in debt using business plans that may not be sustainable.

There is one NGO, Huiling Organization, that is showing others how things can be done. Huiling has broken away from traditional institutional care to help disabled residents forge a life of their own.

Independently raising money

A man who wishes to be identified as Ma Bo, 28, was happily decorating a traditional Beijing courtyard with Spring Festival lanterns and paper-cuts in Yanle Hutong last Saturday morning as his friends were busy making dumplings and handicrafts.

The courtyard is where Huilin Organization has been located since its establishment in 2000. Ma is one of the residents: he has received day-care and vocational training for the last two years. In the lovely courtyard, he has a total of 30 "class-mates" in the courtyard.

Except for his slightly delayed reaction speeds, Ma – and most of his classmates – is no different from an average person. He has skills – he can cook – and hobbies – he likes to draw – and, yes, feelings – he has a crush on a girl.

At noon, a group of Belgian tourists will have lunch with them. "I love to see those foreigners in Peking Opera costumes play with us," he said. "That's so funny. And I can sell my cookies and toys to them."

With the help of the Intrepid Foundation, an Australia-based charity organization, Huiling has gotten many foreign tourism agencies to list its venerable courtyard in Yanle Hutong among their destinations. This is just one of the many ingenious ways Huiling Organization, which subsists entirely on donations, makes money.

Having traditional dumpling lunches, playing games and buying handicrafts are three typical things foreign tourists do when they visit Huiling.

Huiling Organization got its start in Guangzhou in 1990, founded by Meng Weina, a pioneer among NGO workers in China. The Beijing branch of Huiling was co-founded by Meng and Jane Pierini, a British social worker from Hong Kong, in April 2000. The organization currently has branches in Xi'an, Tianjin, Chongqing, Changsha, Qingyuan in Guangdong Province and Hong Kong.

Meng said her community-based organization is running a "profit-making model," but "not for the organization itself."

The money it gets from hosting tourists is given to the disabled. And how much money? "Definitely more than the municipal government's minimum monthly income benchmark," Meng said, proudly.

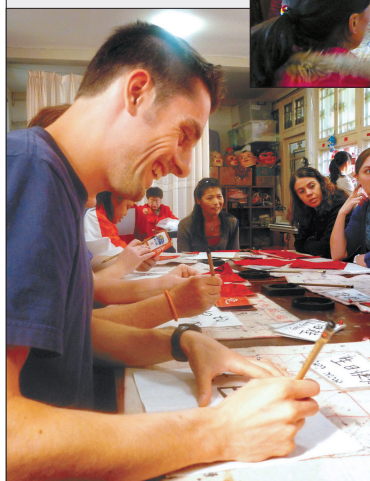
"Our members can both receive



Members from Beijing Huiling Organization make eco bags for sale at a shopping mall.



Foreign tourists visit Huiling Organization.



Foreigners learn Chinese calligraphy with Huiling Organization.



Foreign tourists learn Peking Opera with Huiling's mentally disabled members. CFP Photos

monthly incomes and earn money directly by selling small handicrafts to tourists," Meng said.

In need of a welfare system for the mentally disabled

By providing home-style daily care and basic vocational training in the making of handicrafts and art, Huiling aims to help its trainees become independent.

In the courtyard, Ma and his classmates are learning at a training center called the "Three Primary Colors", which was set up by Meng.

The workshop provides trainees the tools to create a range of arts and crafts, such as gift cards and calendars.

"They gain vocational skills and a sense of self worth, as well as wages for their work," Meng said.

She complained that while China is engaged in improving almost all sectors of its social welfare system, it has long neglected the physically and mentally disabled.

Meanwhile, grassroots forces are weak. In the Summit Forum for the Special Olympic Games held in Beijing in September 2008, an official from the China Disabled Persons' Federation said that nationwide there were only 3,500 private organizations providing daily care to a mere 110,000 mentally and physically disabled people.

"Beijing has about 100 such NGOs, but none of them are legally registered under the Minister of Civil Affairs. Everybody knows the reason. No governmental department would like to serve as their supervision body. No supervision, no registration," Meng said.

Zhang Baolin, chairman of the Mentally Disabled Department under the China Disabled Persons' Federation, said that low- and medium-grade mentally disabled people are frequently consigned into positions that amount to slave labor in underground factories.

Zhang said between 2007 and 2010, his organization received 21 reports of slave labor cases involving mentally disabled people from 10 provinces. Most were working in underground coal mines and brick kilns. Two people were killed in these environments.

"It's not the greed of factory bosses, but the vacuum in the welfare system," Zhang said.

He suggested the government could give more freedom to the pri-

vate sector.

In China, a country with any laws or administrative regulations regarding care of the disabled, these people are seen as a burden – to the state and, in many cases, to their own family.

"China has not warmed up to the concept that taking care of the disabled is the responsibility of society, and not just the 'bad luck' family," Zhang said.

He said that though there are charity houses under the Ministry of Civil Affairs, they only help homeless disabled people.

Grassroots forces can be more powerful

Zhou Peiyi, a social worker from Hong Kong working for Huiling, said that Hong Kong can be a model for Beijing.

She said babies who are deemed mentally handicapped are specially monitored by a government branch until they reach 6.

They will receive special education until they turn 15. Afterwards, they will receive professional training and assistance in finding employment.

"These bills are all paid by the government," Zhou said. "Meanwhile, social workers will be there for them all their life."

Meng said the system is a fine idea, but before it can be established, private organizations must become more adaptable and help the mentally disabled under the current guidelines.

"Instead of building hundreds of empty state-owned shelters, NGOs that are based in local communities should provide education and vocational training," she said.

Huiling's vision is for the mentally disabled to have equal opportunities to contribute to their communities.

"Our mission is to improve the quality of the lives of the mentally disabled and their families," Meng said.

Meng is now running a new project called "Family Group Homes" by renting apartments where a house-mother or father provides family-style care for up to six residents whose parents would otherwise not be able to care for them.

"All in all, the best help for the mentally disabled is not to keep them at home, away from social life, but to teach them how to go out," Meng said.

French juggler performs in Spring Festival gala

By Wang Yu

For most jugglers, their stage is the street or small venues that cater to niche audiences. Few have the chance to perform with more than 1,000 other artists in a TV gala broadcast to a national audience.

But that's the honor given to French juggler Matthieu Lindenlaub, 28, who spent four days in Shenyang, Liaoning Province two weeks ago with local artist Jiuji to record the Spring Festival Gala of Liaoning.

Lindenlaub was the only foreigner to appear in the four-hour show. It took him one week of practice with Jiuji to master all the tricks.

"That was crazy for me. I don't know if there are any shows like this in Europe. There were about a thousand artists performing one after another and the venue was huge. Everything was new to me there," Lindenlaub said.

However, that wasn't the first time the juggler performed on Chinese TV. Last week he showed up on a CCTV program with his partner. The TV station did not arrange an interpreter, so he had to answer questions from the audience with his limited English.

Influenced by his father, who is also a juggler, Lindenlaub started to juggle 12 years ago. In 2001, he

began focusing on contact juggling – a form of object manipulation that focuses on the movement of objects such as balls in contact with the body. Five years later, Lindenlaub started to perform on streets and in European festivals.

"What attracted me to juggling is its nature of sharing with people," Lindenlaub said. "When you perform on the street, you're sharing something with the passengers. When practicing with other artists, you share your new tricks with them and develop new moves together. It used to be a part of the circus but now it is more open."

"Above all, juggling does not require much money or good equipment. All you need is a mirror ball, then you can play everywhere."

Contact juggling has its own style. Lindenlaub tends to focus on one ball and use different parts of his body during a performance. In France, jugglers are part of a very small scene. But because of that, they are all close with each other, and Lindenlaub has had many opportunities to join them at various meet-ups across Europe.

Besides juggling, the artist has a regular job as a masseur. He learned Chinese massage in 2004 and practiced last year at the Beijing Traditional Chinese Medicine

University next to Dongzhimen Hospital. As a foreigner practicing Chinese massage, Lindenlaub usually stuns his customers.

"At first they feel strange but soon they see I'm not that different from Chinese masseurs," Lindenlaub said. "Doing massage is my job, but it's also connected with juggling. You have to feel with your hands and try to develop your sensitive touch."

In Beijing, Lindenlaub juggles at Natooke, the fixed-gear bicycle and juggling shop at Wudaoying Hutong. He got to know local artists and foreign jugglers through that shop.

"Before that, I never expected to meet so many people who juggle here," Lindenlaub said. "I met Jiuji at one such event. Now he's a partner and also my agent. He knows me and what I do well."

Lindenlaub's first performance in China was last October at the opening party for a new furniture showroom. After that, offers came regularly. Now Lindenlaub practices several hours after work – he's the equivalent of an unpaid intern – in the hospital.

"I'm not in a hurry because both juggling and Chinese massage require a lifetime to master," he said. "But I still hope that I can stay here longer and find a job – though it isn't easy for a foreign masseur."



Matthieu Lindenlaub

Photo provided by Matthieu Lindenlaub

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BEIJING TODAY

Australia Day celebration benefits young people and flood victims

By Liang Meilan

On Wednesday, to celebrate Australia Day, the Australian Chamber of Commerce (AustCham Beijing) held a youth networking event at Punk Bar featuring a scholarship program. It will organize another charitable celebration tonight.

The scholarship program, called Australia China Young Leaders Program, is co-organized with the Australia China Council and aims to get talented young Australians to work and study in China. The Australia Day event was held to introduce these scholarship recipients to the Australian Community in Beijing.

The Friday event will be the AustCham Beijing Australia Day Kooka Networking Drinks, held at Aria in China World Hotel.

Internationally recognized Michelin Star executive chef Matthew McCool will be preparing traditional Australian dishes.

In addition, the coming event will help AustCham Beijing raise money for victims of the recent floods in Australia. The floods have directly and indirectly affected many members of the



The Australian Chamber of Commerce holds a youth networking event at Punk Bar to celebrate Australia Day.

Photo provided by The Australian Chamber of Commerce

Australian community in Beijing, so AustCham will be raising money to assist in the recovery of affected people.

People attending the event will have the opportunity to win many prizes including large

packs of Australian meat, Australian beer and wine, and Australian clothing.

Those who want to attend can visit austcham.org for more information.

Australia Day celebrates the

anniversary of the arrival of the First Fleet in Sydney Cove on January 26, 1788. The First Fleet was the first group of 11 ships that sailed from Britain to Australia to establish the first British colony there.

Sharing ideas at Beijing Open Party for geeks

By Liang Meilan

On January 21, in the Thoughtworks Beijing office near Dongzhimen, some 80 IT practitioners and enthusiasts from all parts of town teamed up for an "unconference" gathering all about sharing ideas.

The event was organized by an IT network called Beijing Open Party, the only network that connects various online technophile groups such as Beijing Java User Group. It holds monthly events.

Unconferences, which Open Party introduced to Beijing in 2008, are rare in China. The topics are not predetermined but

generated by member submissions and voting.

Saturday's meeting covered topics related to co-working, startup financing, Buddhism, the Java mobile platform development and product quality.

Topics are not limited to IT. In the first session, attendees listened attentively to a lecture about Robert's Rules of Order, which guides procedures to perfect efficiency.

Open Party once invited an NGO to talk about its nonprofit charity tour.

"In hearing it, I realized life isn't just about how much money

you make," said Li Xiang, a consultant from Thoughtworks.

"The core of such events is providing opportunities for geeks who are used to staying at home to go out and meet each other," said Li Dan, one of Open Party's founders.

"Knowing well that geeks don't necessarily like being confined at home, we decided to borrow the concept of unconference, a topic-driven community event format we frequently saw in the Bay Area and Silicon Valley," said co-founder Tian Yue.

In Western countries, unconferences can be so informal that

they're held in bars. Open Party hasn't gone that far – yet.

"In China, it is very hard to find a venue for geek gatherings," said co-founder Qian Anchuan. "Open Party set the example, and I hope the format can be used by other IT communities."

Open Party is beneficial in another broader sense.

"Many Chinese people make friends based on practical reasons. They even know how to calculate the ROI (return on investment) in making a new friend. But they forget that friendship is about sincerity and selflessness," Tian said.

Event

Reducing stress for pets during Spring Festival

Spring Festival is a time for fireworks – lots and lots of fireworks – but while it creates a festive atmosphere for bipeds, what about your four-legged friends? To prevent pets from freaking out, veterinarians and pet behavior experts from the International Center for Veterinary Service (ICVS) will offer tips for pet owners this Saturday.

Where: ICVS, Kent Center, 29 Liangmaqiao Lu, Anjialou, Chaoyang District

When: January 29, 11 am – noon

Tel: 8456 1939

Cost: Free

Celebrate Spring Festival with the Australia China Alumni Association

Celebrating Spring Festival in a traditional Chinese way can be a special experience for expats. The Australia China Alumni Association is providing a good chance by holding an event with a banquet dinner that includes dumplings and beer.

Where: Baguo Buyi Restaurant, 2/F, China Southern Hotel, 10 Dongsanhuan Lu, Chaoyang District

When: January 28, 7-9 pm

Tel: 6567 2188

Cost: 130 yuan, 100 yuan for members

Learn to make traditional Chinese crafts

Lily's Showroom, an antique store at Gaobeidian Furniture Street, is holding a workshop for expats to learn to make Chinese folk crafts.

Where: Lily's Showroom, 3/F, Gaobeidian Furniture Jie, Chaoyang District

When: every weekend, 9 am – 5 pm

Tel: 13651348956

Cost: 100 yuan, includes material

(By Liang Meilan)

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The chaos of Chinese 'TOEFL' twins will cease

By Chu Meng

The Chinese Proficiency Test (HSK) is China's national standardized test for Chinese language proficiency of non-native speakers.

Since its introduction in 1988, 93 test centers in China and 226 abroad – in 120 countries and regions – have been established, serving a total of 1 million test-takers.

However, the tests designed for those living in China – developed by the HSK Center of Beijing Language and Culture University – and tests designed for those living abroad – designed by the National Office for Teaching Chinese – have always been different.

This year, the two will merge.

On December 16, the day of the last HSK of the year, Sun Dejin, an HSK designer from the Beijing Language and Culture University (BLCU), held a banner that read, "Protect BLCU's benefits to HSK" in front of a testing site.

One week later, university authorities announced the merger of BLCU's test and the National Office for Teaching Chinese test. In the future, all work will be managed from the National Office.

Brand new HSK on the way

HSK is currently divided into three categories: beginning level (HSK Basic), elementary to intermediate level (HSK Elementary-Intermediate) and advanced level (HSK Advanced). A test for each level is held twice a year, both in China and abroad.

After the merger, a new shareholding company will develop a new HSK testing system. The university will account for a minority half of the shares.

More important, the previous HSK test question pools will be merged. A series of enormous reforms and adjustments to those questions are on the way, which will bring about a large shake-up for both the teachers and test-takers.

"The university will no longer have independent responsibilities and rights to the HSK. It is so unfair," Sun said.

The 64-year-old professor recalled that as early as 1984, when few foreigners came to study in China, the university began planning and building its question pool. Sun has worked as a test creator from the very beginning.

Three years later, the State Council established a national-level office for promoting the Chinese language to the world.

"There was controversy about who was responsible for the test research and development, who will be responsible for future investments," Sun said.

There was chaos for 10 years. In 1997, the rights to HSK development and management within China belonged to the university,



HSK test center at Beijing Language and Culture University

CFP Photos



13,000 foreigners take the last HSK test of the year in Beijing on December 14.



German students at the Confucius Institute learn Chinese.

while those overseas belonged to the National Office.

But that hardly abated the controversy. "We were both responsible for designing test questions," Sun said. "That is to say, there have been two completely different sets of tests in existence since 1987."

Economic benefits to owning the tests

BLCU president Cui Xiliang

said the merger was a purely practical decision. "A country cannot have two different language testing systems," he said. "It is a barrier to the promotion of Chinese."

But HSK is like the 26-year-old child of BLCU, said Zhang Kai, another researcher on the HSK panel. "We raised it like a son."

"We went to many Western countries to learn their concepts

and methods of designing a language testing system," he said.

Zhang said in the 1980s, he and his workmates began to form their own concept of how to teach Mandarin and assess proficiency.

"It took us five years, from 1983 to 1988, to develop the first HSK test, held inside the university," he said.

The HSK testing center at BLCU was established in 1989. At the same time, the State Council gave them permission to hold tests in China and overseas. In 1992, the HSK test became a national-level test.

HSK certificates were the only official documents students had that showed their language proficiency when applying for graduate and postgraduate programs in China. They also became a standard reference for potential employers, organizations and recruiters.

Zhang said that by the end of 1996, the university's HSK test had received 470,000 testers, turning a profit three years in row.

In 2006, the test center had 93 test centers nationwide and was making an annual profit of 20 million yuan.

HSK divide puzzles foreigners

In 2004, the National Office for Testing Chinese launched a national-level language promotion program in about 100 countries as part of the Confucius Institute. Each institute was responsible for assessing HSK tests in the country it was located.

Meanwhile, the National Office offered scholarships for foreigners to study in China.

"These practices puzzled foreigners who were familiar with the old HSK system," Zhang said. "Two HSK tests, two different sets of content, two different standards and different scoring methods. But both were accepted by Chinese educational institutes and enterprises."

Rosita Wong, 35, a Canadian-born Chinese, said she had a bad experience with the HSK. "I had just accepted a job offer from a big Chinese company in Canada when I found out I was pregnant," she said. "I decided to prepare for my HSK test at the Confucius Institute in Ottawa."

After giving birth and coming to Beijing, she found that the questions she studied back home were completely from the ones on the BLCU test.

"I had to start all over again," she said.

In 2009, the National Office furthered muddled things by beginning its own domestic testing centers.

Cui said it's good for the HSK system in the long run to merge. "After all, Chinese language promotion is not just about money. It's about the country's image and Chinese culture."

Tests will be held twice a year simultaneously in China and overseas. One will be in April, the other in November. Final dates should be posted on the official websites of both BLCU and the National Office.

Information

HSK center under Beijing Language and Culture University

Website: hsk.org.cn
Tel: 8230 3672/3048
Where: No. 15, Xueyuan Lu, Haidian District

HSK center under the Nation Office for Testing Chinese

Website: hanban.edu.cn
Tel: 5859 5933
Where: No. 129, Deshengmen Wai, Xicheng District (Confucius Institute headquarters)

Torment of the s

Filmmaker swaps success for the struggling



Zhao Dayong

By He Jianwei

Many people seek the meaning of life. Some live for fortune; some seek fame. Others pursue power and fun.

Zhao Dayong, 41, an independent filmmaker in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, gave up his profitable advertising agency more than 10 years ago for something else: film.

Since then, he has not made a penny.

Zhao films people who are struggling: from the vagabonds of Shanghai to those in unemployed villages of Yunnan Province. He shares their feelings living in a country in the throes of huge social change.



Street Life tells the struggles of the rural migrants who scavenge the sides of Shanghai's Nanjing Road, a major shopping street and symbol of the country's economic prosperity.

The southern tradition of morning tea and slow-cooked soup are routine for Zhao in spite of his northeastern upbringing.

Born in Fushun, Liaoning Province, Zhao moved to Guangzhou to found an advertising agency in 1997. Despite a profitable career of filming ads, he tired of his work.

It was a 1999 visit to Lijiang, Yunnan Province that would change his life. He was fascinated by the beautiful sights of morning in the countryside, particularly a striking elderly woman who fanned a small coal oven as a ray of light cut through the smoke to illuminate her face.

With his wife being from Yunnan, he decided to ask his father-in-law where best to begin his filmmaking journey. He pointed him to Zhiziluo, a forgotten and impoverished village in the mountains near the China-Myanmar border.

Zhao spent the next six years behind his camera, learning how that rural hinterland has been left behind by China's economic miracle.

Once a bustling country capital, Zhiziluo has since become a network of empty streets, abandoned shops and unemployed villagers, many of whom are part of the Lisu and Nu ethnic minorities.

His documentary, *Ghost Town*, is arranged in three sections, each dealing with a different aspect of the villagers' lives.

"Voices," the first part, tells the story of Yuehan, a preacher in the local Christian community. He and his 87-year-old father, a formerly jailed Lisu preacher who studied under a Western missionary, share a tense relationship tied to the past and future of their village church.

The second part, "Recollections," tells the story of young

lovers whose relationship is stymied by cultural and economic obstacles. The young man, Pu Biqu, must decide whether to leave Zhiziluo for brighter prospects in the city. His girlfriend faces the possibility of being sold by her father to a wealthy bachelor on the east coast to resolve her family's financial woes.

The third part, "Innocence," is the story of 12-year-old Lisu boy Ah Long. Having been abandoned by his family, Ah Long scavenges the hillside to feed himself and kills time playing games.

"As Chinese busied themselves with becoming materially prosperous, they lost sight of the cultural and spiritual meaning of life," Zhao said. "In this film I wanted to explore the idea of these lost histories and ravaged cultures, and by extension my own cultural identity."

The film was awarded the Independent Spirit Award

Soul



Ghost Town depicts how the rural hinterland has been left behind by the country's economic miracle.



“Street Life is the result and Ghost Town is the reason. During early filming, I thought I could come to understand both people. In the end, I came to understand myself.”



Photos provided by Zhao Dayong

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at the 5th China Documentary Film Festival in Beijing in 2008, and was the only work by a Chinese director at the New York Film Festival in 2009.

During the filming, Zhao made a second documentary, *Street Life*, while living in Shanghai from 2004 to 2006. The film tells the struggles of rural migrants who scavenge the sides of Nanjing Road, a major shopping street and symbol of the country's economic growth.

Behind the glitz of main street stores, homeless migrants search alley trash cans looking for garbage discarded by the bustling crowds.

They come from other provinces, many without true names. Some are identified only by their towns or provinces of origin, and others by names that play on their physical appearance such as “Fatass” and “Dark Skin.”

Ignored by Shanghai residents, these “invisible people”

are a reminder of the legions who move to thriving cities to find a better life. They make a living by collecting garbage, stealing, begging or singing on the streets.

Dark Skin is the focus of the film. When his father gets into debt and his mother flees their household, he runs off to live as a vagabond with his friend Ah Qiao.

When the two earn 1,000 yuan by collecting garbage, Ah Qiao skips town with the money.

But *Dark Skin* remains faithful to his fellow scavengers. When he earns money, he invites his friends out to eat. He is arrested twice – once for grabbing a police officer's hat while drunk and again for stealing street signs.

After being released from detention, he develops mental problems. He jumps, sings and rolls on the ground in front of the shopping malls or near the elevators.

The film debuted at Austria's Vienna International Film

Festival in 2006.

Last weekend, the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art showed both documentaries.

Street Life and *Ghost Town* play as if part of the same story, reveling in their portrayal of the cost of urbanization. The former is about villagers coming to the cities and the latter about those they leave behind.

“*Street Life* is the result and *Ghost Town* is the reason,” Zhao said. “During early filming, I thought I could come to understand both people. In the end, I came to understand myself.”

Today Zhao lives in a house in Guangzhou. While his new career is not profitable, he has no fears of abject poverty.

“I will not leave Guangzhou. But even though it is my home, I still feel a sense of drifting,” Zhao said.

Finding the real China

A journey from the coast to Qomolangma



Photo by Zhang Huan

By He Jianwei

To understand China and the Chinese, German columnist Christian Y. Schmidt took a journey down National Highway 318 for three months in 2007.

The road, which connects the east coast with the Himalayas, runs from Shanghai to Zhangmu, a Tibetan township on the China-Nepal border.

In 2008, Schmidt wrote an account of his trip in a travelogue in German, *Alone Among 1.3 Million: A Journey From Shanghai to Katmandu*. It soon became a bestseller in Germany and helped many Germans understand modern China.

Last year, Gong Yingxin translated it into Chinese, where it has been popular with readers because of its wit and keen observations.

Schmidt has lived in Beijing for five years, but during his first two he was locked into the expat community – visiting German artists' exhibitions, attending national celebrations at embassies, enjoying New York punk music at a club, eating at Western restaurants and speaking German and English most of the time.

Gradually, he forgot what Chinese he learned in the first year here.

"A dustman inspired me to break out of the expat scene," he said, describing the start of his journey.

Every day he saw a garbage man near his house who would ask him the same question in Chinese: "What are you doing in China?"

At first, Schmidt squeezed a smile to him and later he changed his route to avoid seeing the garbage man. But the guy would always find him to ask more forcefully, "What the hell are you doing in China?"

Finally, Schmidt came up with an idea to travel alone to places where few expats had ever traveled. "It would give me a chance to see the real China, and also force me to learn Chinese. After my travels, I hoped I could say something back to the garbage man in fluent Chinese: You're a pain in the ass," he wrote in the preface.

Schmidt chose National Highway 318, the longest highway running east to west popularly known as the "spine of China."

He compared it to the US Route 66,

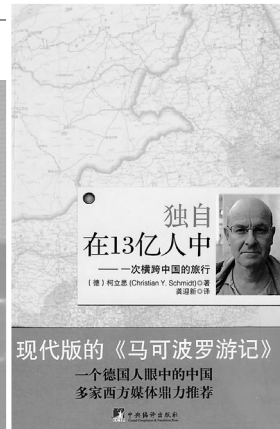
only 1,000 kilometers longer. He called it a road of superlatives, because the western part of it stretches to the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau.

On the trip, he observed that Chinese people prefer to make conclusions and are fascinated with numbers. When he visited Xitang Town, Zhejiang Province, he bought a guide book that introduced the many rivers, bridges and alleys of the town.

He also noticed that traveling means shopping for many Chinese. "They can't say they've been somewhere unless they buy something, even if they visit the pyramids, the Louvre and Plaza San Marco," he wrote.

In one strange scene on a long-distance bus, passengers listened to loud music or the TV rather than looking at the landscape out the window. In many ways, it was a trip back through time from the 21st century glitz of modern Shanghai to the almost medieval culture of mountain villages.

On his way, Schmidt passed through the world's most populous city, Chongqing, saw the world's largest dam, countless monasteries and Mount Qomolangma.



Alone Among 1.3 Billion: A Journey From Shanghai to Katmandu
By Christian Y. Schmidt,
242pp, Central Compilation & Translation Press, 29 yuan

Nostalgia, a sickness of modern life

By He Jianwei

"Everyone is on the road. It is a road going far away from your homeland and one on which you cannot go in reverse," Cui Weiping, Beijing Film Academy professor and social critic, said January 15 at Trend Lounge Bookstore.

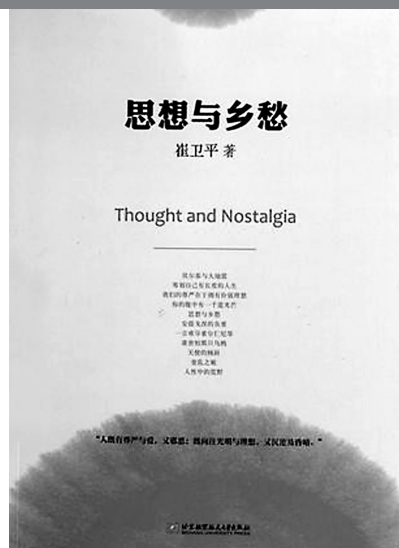
Last November, Cui released her latest collection of essays on philosophy and aesthetics, *Thought and Nostalgia*, dealing with the importance of values, tastes and the roles of an intellectual in modern society.

Unlike other academics' essays, Cui's style is easy to follow.

Tracing the many anecdotes of philosophers and writers, such as Voltaire, Denis Diderot, Joseph Conrad, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and Wang Xiaobo, Cui analyzes how the relationships between those people and their societies.

The book's name comes from the title of an article about the anecdotes of a mid-night talk between Russian-British philosopher and historian Isaiah Berlin and Russian poet Anna Akhmatova.

Akhmatova's themes include meditations on time and memory, and the difficulties of living and writing in the shadow



Thought and Nostalgia
By Cui Weiping, 207pp, Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics Press, 29 yuan

of Stalinism.

After she released her first collection of poems titled *Evening* in 1912,

Akhmatova was soon regarded as the soul of the Silver Age of Russian poetry, referring to the period of the first two decades of the 20th century.

Starting from 1921, she was beset by a series of tragedies, as her first husband was executed. In 1935, her son and second husband was taken into custody and her husband died in the Gulag.

Cui said it was not only a personal tragedy for Akhmatova, but a reflection of the nation's cultural and spiritual turmoil.

At the end of her long talk with Berlin, Akhmatova recited her unpublished poems to him. Cui summed up her message as "all art and poems are a form of nostalgia."

"For many people, the process of modernization is also a way of forcing them to leave their birthplace. When they set off along the road, they have a place called a 'homeland.' Nostalgia does not refer to a specific place, but indicates a memory of the past," Cui said.

In the book, nostalgia includes Chinese poet Haizi's anxiety of the land, Berlin's yearning for a cultural golden age, and Russian filmmaker Andrei Tarkovsky's longing for his spiritual homeland.

Timezone 8 book listing

Timezone 8 is a Hong Kong-based publisher, distributor and retailer of books on contemporary art, architecture, photography and design. This week, it recommends three new titles to *Beijing Today* readers.



Chen Ke: Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World

By Chen Ke, 108pp, Timezone 8, \$30

This volume contains Che's work of the past two years, painting little girls in a style mixing cartoons with oil paintings by Western masters.



Ouyang Chun: Painting the King

By Margrit Brehm and Ouyang Chun, 160pp, Timezone 8, \$50

This book gathers a series of works by Beijing-based artist Ouyang, titled "King," which narrates the tale of a king from Chinese antiquity.



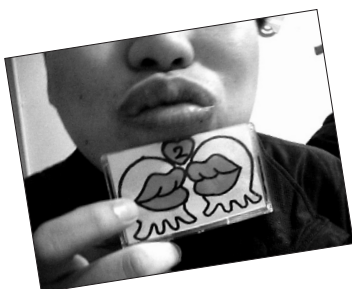
Dong Wensheng: No World-view for the Face

By Dong Wensheng and Zuo Jing, 130pp, Timezone 8, \$35

Dong's works in sculpture, photography and video combine elements from traditional art with contemporary imagery: a rock garden grows out of the sheared-off top of a man's head, a bird carries a human skull over a cityscape and a tattooed and headless body is recreated in plaster like an archaeological exhibit.

(By He Jianwei)

Team diners scour city for best eats



By Wang Yu

One of the top social activities in Beijing is food hunting, due to the multitude of regional and national cuisines available in the capital.

But looking for restaurants can be boring if you go alone. Many young people have started forming dining teams to find interesting new menu options together.

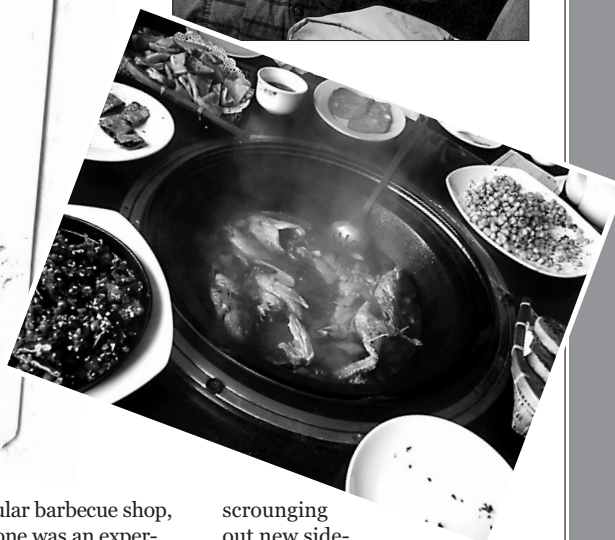
Unlike when one goes out with friends, dining teams eat out at regular intervals. Sometimes members are insiders in the restaurant industry like former barbecue shop owners or food editors.

They record their nights out in photos and blogs, but seldom make all the information public.



The group keeps a photo album of its meetings as a keepsake for its members.

Photos by Elve Liu



Last Sunday, Eat and Drunk Youth held its last party before Chinese New Year at a coiling fish restaurant in Shunyi. Many members of the dining team were especially busy before the holidays, especially those who worked in the press.

First started on Huabook, a social networking site that serves media professionals, Eat and Drunk Youth held its first event at a roast fish restaurant in Sanyuanqiao three years ago. It was like an offline party for users to meet in real life.

In late 2008, roast fish was the most popular food in the city. Elve Liu, a food editor, chose the place because she had interviewed the shop owner and tried the fish beforehand.

"At that time we were just some people who wanted to see what their online friends really looked like. Soon we picked up more people with the same interests. Some who enjoyed it came again for the next event. And then we kept growing," says Huang Yi, a journalist in the group.

@ 饭醉团

2010.12.19



Liu is the most active member. As a food editor and former barbecue shop owner, he knows every hidden corner that serves excellent food.

Bai Yun, a graphic designer, is another senior food hunter in the group. As the oldest, Bai knows traditional Beijing restaurants and snack shops. His picks usually focus on old-time culture.

The group has eight members at different corners of the city. Usually there are two dinner parties arranged each month with a new restaurant each time. They never miss any popular cuisine each season.

"At the beginning we also had some big dinner parties with more than 20 people. But that was not good for everyone, as it was hard to be familiar with everyone. That's not what we

wanted, and why we later decided to limit Eat and Drunk Youth to an eight-person gang," Huang says.

Trying new restaurants is always fun because even the chefs are trying new things to attract customers. In early spring 2009, the group dined at a new barbecue restaurant at Houhai. At the beginning, the food was fairly ordinary, but then the owner came out to ask if the crew was interested in trying some new ultra-spicy chili peppers. The pepper turned out to be too hot for most members to handle.

"That was one of the most unforgettable dinners we had. Those who took a bite had a really hard night. Their faces turned white after one order of lamb with the chili peppers. Some of them had to go hunting to find an all-night pharmacy to relieve the burning," Huang says.

Another time the group met at a restaurant decorated like a public bathroom. The owner had

another popular barbecue shop, but the new one was an experiment. Everyone sat around the cold pool.

Through its events, Eat and Drunk Youth watches the rise and fall of local restaurants.

The team's visits have also helped out many of the restaurants, as the editors share tips about other

scrounging out new sidewalk food stall that serve cheap, delicious meals. Last summer, Liu was introduced to a street hidden near a residential community at Jimenqiao. The neighborhood became the only place the group visited more than once.

"We believe that cheap food can also be excellent. People worry about hygienic conditions at street stalls, but those worries can result in them missing out on a good thing. Life is all about sitting around gossiping with friends over barbecue and beer," Huang says.

When there are no new restaurants worth a look, they stay home and cook on their own. The group keeps a photo album of its meetings as a keepsake for its members.

"Even if we are not the same age – Bai is 10 years older than me – we share a common attitude toward life. As an only child, for me, the group feels like a big family. Nothing is better than a night out with my brothers and sisters," Liu says.



new places that can be a source of inspiration for new restaurateurs.

The group is also keen on

Charity bags for the New Year



Charity bag, 588 yuan

Photo provided by Brand Nü

By Wang Yu

With Chinese New Year approaching, the hottest animal in the next few weeks will be the rabbit. The charity shop Brand Nü, along with local bag producer 08/15, is offering rabbit-themed outfits and donating portions of its proceeds to those in need.

The new series includes T-shirts with rabbit designs (88 yuan), heavy-duty messenger bags (588 yuan) and laptop sleeves (328 yuan) with "2011" insignia. All the bags are made by the Miaolosophy workshop, which offers employment to the disabled and members of ethnic minorities.

If Miaolosophy is the manufacturer, 08/15 is in charge of quality control. Founded by German Thomaz Fahrholz in Beijing, 08/15 has produced a series of uniquely designed bags. When the designer has products that he thinks can help the disabled, he turns to Nathan Zhang, owner of Brand Nü, to help him design patterns.

"We've known each other a year and often cooperate," Zhang said. "It took us one month to go from a simple idea to real products. After I designed the main theme, Thomaz did some modifications. All the products are painted in the same pattern to celebrate the year of the rabbit."

All revenue will go into the budget for future charity projects. Only 20 messenger bags and 50 computer sleeves will be made. All the products have been available since Tuesday at Brand Nü and Palma Boutique at Nali Patio in Sanlitun.

"If the rabbit series sells well, we can market our next products: embroider handicrafts from Baihua workshop in Ningxia Province, which offers jobs to women in rural areas," Zhang said.

Where to buy

Brand Nü, 61 Wudaoying Hutong, Dongcheng District

Palma Boutique, A202-203, Nali Patio, 81 North Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District
Website: 0815-bags.com

Fresh skin care from all-natural ingredients

By Annie Wei

People who love natural herbal skin care products know the magical results that essential oils can produce for one's body and mind.

However, essential oils oxidize quickly. The high-quality ones are not only the most pure but also have the shortest shelf lives.

Rosewater.taobao.com is recommended for essential oil enthusiasts. It sells handmade soap (20 yuan), various kinds of pure dew (50-60 yuan for 500 milliliters) and essential oil products (30-50 yuan for 50 milliliters).

Essential oil products like slimming oil (36 yuan for 30 milliliters) with sweet almond, grapefruit, chamomile and mint are freshly mixed after a customer places an online order and delivered within three days.

All products are handmade by the owner, sealed in a simple brown glass and labeled with a three-month expiration date.

The store's best-sellers include white rose dew (78 yuan for 500 milliliters) with strong yet pure white rose aroma; facial tighten-up essential oil (60 yuan for 30 milliliters) with a nice lavender smell and good moisture; 100 percent natural body moisturizer (40 yuan for 240 milliliters), with strong chamomile extract aroma, that pampers your skin and helps it avoid dryness.

For people who prefer well-known brands, we recommend South Australia's Jurlique's skin balancing facial oil (520 yuan for 50 milliliters).

The products use more expensive essential oils like organic chamomile, calendula, marshmallow, rose, avo-

cado, macadamia and rose hip. This oil helps soothe the skin against moisture loss and improves skin elasticity.

It's non-greasy and easily absorbed; flakes will soon disappear. Place two or three drops on a cotton pad and spread evenly on the face and neck. The smell is mild and pleasant.

Jurlique

Where: 1st floor, Shin Kong Plaza, 89 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am - 10 pm
Tel: 6590 2511



Jurlique skin balancing facial oil, 520 yuan for 50 milliliters
Photo provided by Jurlique



Sweet almond oil, 30 yuan for 100 milliliters



Slimming oil, 60 yuan for 100 milliliters
Photos by Ding Chunhan

Tahitian Noni beverage

By Annie Wei

For those seeking alternatives to carbonated beverages, the flourishing pure-juice beverage market makes it easy. One can find cherry juice from Shandong Province (8.9 to 13.8 yuan per 300 milliliters) that is at least 50 percent natural cherry, pure pomegranate juice from Xinjiang Province (38 yuan for 500 milliliters) and now Tahitian Noni (250-400 yuan per liter) from the US.

Natural juices are said to work at the cellular level to promote health. They are especially good for people who plan to party hard.

These drinks can be found from supermarkets like April Gourmet, BHG and Lohas.

April Gourmet

Where: 1 Sanlitun Bei Xiaojie, Chaoyang District

Open: 8 am - 9 pm
Tel: 8460 1030

BHG

Where: B1, Solana, 6 Chaoyang Gongyuan Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am - 10 pm
Tel: 5905 6808

Lohas

Where: 52 Jingshun Lu, Chaoyang District
Open: 8 am - 8 pm
Tel: 8459 4825

Tahitian Noni beverage, 250-400 yuan per bottle

Photo provided by Tahitian Noni



Leading Japanese restaurants opened in town

By Annie Wei

To many, Japanese cuisine is about sushi and sashimi. Leading restaurant chains like Nadaman and Kanisouke, with years of experience, prepare authentic and special dishes from modern Japan.

Nadaman – delicate food

Established in Osaka in 1830, this storied restaurant is known for pursuing the delicate balance between old-world charm and modern food culture.

In December Nadaman Beijing re-opened on the fourth floor of China World Summit Wing. Diners here can enjoy traditional cuisine like *kaiseki*, a traditional multicourse Japanese haute dinner, as well as a la carte, ideal for business meals or simply a gathering with friends and family.

Chef Karasawa Hiroaki, who has cooked with the Nadaman group of restaurants in Japan for 10 years, moved to Beijing for this new restaurant. He brings in mainstream Japanese ideas of quality cooking, along with selective seasonal ingredients from all over the world.

The restaurant attracts lots of guests during weekday lunch hours. The set menu, priced between 120 and 200 yuan, is a good deal, with healthy and delicate foods including relish, salad, savory egg custard, rice, pickles and miso soup.

Pay an extra 200 yuan to update to the lunch course. The *kaisei* lunch (480 yuan) is luxurious with appetizers like sea cucumbers, chicken and cucumber with sesame sauce and sweet jelly.

Its first sushi has an assortment of tuna, Norwegian salmon, amberjack and the chef's special yellow tail with white turnip and shrimp in soy sauce. The broiled dish is fresh Norway salmon with olive oil and citron soy sauce.

We particularly like the set's rice arrangement – steamed rice mixed with chopped



Ice cream, 60 yuan



Appetizer, 60 yuan

Photos by Ding Chunhan

prawn tempura. The prawn tempura is fresh and chewy. The restaurant uses rice from a supplier in northeast China because their supplier in Japan said fresh and seasonal rice would be available after the Chinese New Year.

We love the house special gula melaka (60 yuan) as dessert, a true delight of vanilla ice cream garnished with coconut milk, sweet sago and brown honey.

Among a wide selection of a la carte dishes, we recommend homemade white asparagus topped with crab meat (60 yuan) for appetizer, a signature dish like Japanese-style sea urchin pudding with con-

sommé jelly (120 yuan), teppan-prepared sauté of foie gras and radish with teriyaki sauce (180 yuan).

The restaurant is well lit and spacious. It has 132 seats with a semi-private sushi bar, three teppanyaki rooms and three private dining rooms. Its interior is a sculptural interpretation of the Japanese weeping willow tree. The "tree" is crafted from over-scaled mirror covered aluminium chopsticks crossing one another reaching up to the ceiling.

Nadaman

Where: Fourth floor of China World Summit Wing, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

Open: 11 am – 10 pm

Tel: 6505 2299

Cost: starting from 200 yuan with 15 percent surcharge



Sushi, 40-100 yuan per piece

Photo provided by China World Summit Wing

Kanisouke – king of crab cuisine

Hokkaido is known for quality seafood, especially crabs. Among hundreds of restaurants in the Hokkaido area, Kanisouke draws in thousands of tourists for its crab hotpot and dishes.

Its first and so far only franchised store in the Chinese mainland just opened on January 20 between Central Park and The Place, said Yoshiaki Kamiyama, the restaurant's marketing manager. Others that have similar names in Chinese are not the real Kanisouke.

The restaurant's special includes steamed hairy crab (1,580 yuan), special crab hotpot set (498 yuan) and blue-fin tuna sashimi (198 to 580 yuan).

Hairy crab is one of the most known products from Hokkaido. However, live seafood like crabs lose fat during transportation and their flavor is not as fresh or delicious; it is also not ideal to freeze them, since doing so generates lots of water, which also affects the crab's flavor.

Therefore, the restaurant in Hokkaido steams the fresh hairy crab before delivering them to China. The steamed crab is prepared with local sea salt and herbs. The salt enhances the crab's natural sweetness.

The restaurant also claims it is the only Japanese restaurant with fresh toro in town. To define "fresh," Yoshiaki Kamiyama, the restaurant's marketing manager, said they mean that a whole tuna weighing 60 to 70 kilograms

was never frozen.

"Fresh tuna can be used for a week, while an unfrozen tuna has only a two-day shelf life," Yoshimi said.

Kanisouke's fresh fish supplier is a company based in Shanghai and the only one with legal documents to import fresh seafood from Japan to China, Yoshiaki said. That also means fresh fish caught in the morning will arrive in Shanghai in the evening and served to Beijing diners the next day.

Blue-fin tuna (198 yuan to 598 yuan) is a rare and dying fish and *Beijing Today* does not recommend it. But the restaurant's hotpot set (498 yuan) can be a delicious comfort. Its crab hotpot set features fat and tender hairy crabs and snow crab meat, appetizer, sashimi and tempura, available for both lunch and dinner after the Chinese New Year and 50 percent off during lunch hour.

The restaurant has 198 seats, with a sushi bar and some private rooms. The biggest private room can seat 30 people, suitable for business entertainment. All rooms are decorated in a soft and light beige color.

Kanisouke

Where: 2nd floor, Yuanyang Guanghua Guoji Dasha, 10 Jintong Xi Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 11:30 am – 2:30 pm and 5-10 pm, closed from February 2-7

Tel: 6561 8668

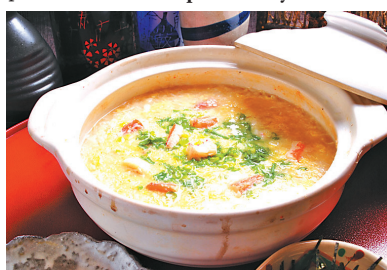


Big white prawn sashimi, 158 yuan for 3 pieces

Photos provided by Kanisouke



Crab hotpot, 498 yuan



Crab congee, 88 yuan

Art meets commerce

By Zhang Dongya

The 4th annual New Year's Fine Art Print Festival held by Amelie Gallery opened at Shin Kong Place this past Saturday.

As many as 100 modern and contemporary print artists, including both masters and young talents from China and abroad, displayed their works.

"This year, it features a themed landscape print named 'Four Seasons, One Spring' by Chinese and international masters, which reflects the diversity of different geographic regions

of their hometowns," curator Tony Chang said.

Zhao Haiping, who is from Tanggu, Tianjin, uses the theme of water. He imbues modernist abstraction with the refined simplicity of Chinese ink in water print.

He Kun, a woodcut artist, depicts a free and easy life in Yunnan Province with dazzling colors and bold lines.

Foreign artists include Thailand-based British printmaker Ralph Kiggell, who uses a Western perceptive to portray

oriental Zen culture, and American woodcut artist Gordon Mortensen, who depicts North American mountains, rivers and lakes.

The festival also features Chinese artist Chen Qi's solo exhibition of tradition water-based ink printmaking and cutting-edge artist Huang Kai's comical woodcuts depicting hutong life.

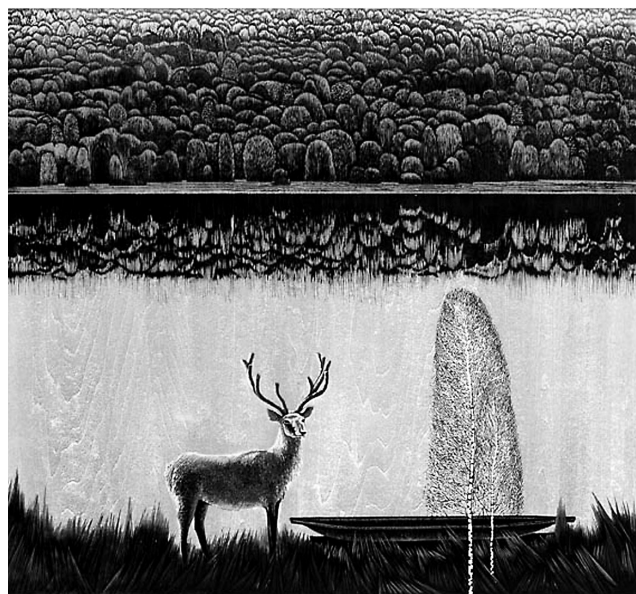
In addition, the festival presents historical documents on printmaking from the earliest surviving woodcut print; the world's earliest dated print book, the Diamond Sutra from the Tang Dynasty (618-907); the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644)'s fictional illustrations and propaganda posters from the Chinese revolution period.

A complete set of printmaking tools and other art-

works, including handcrafted books and installations with printmaking elements, are also on display.

Festival organizers hold printmaking workshops and lectures each weekend from 2 to 4:30 pm for those who want to learn more about woodcutting.

Since this festival is at Shin Kong Place – it moved from 798 Art District – many shoppers have dropped by with kids to learn how to make simple woodcuts. Open every day is a station where kids can design their own cards. Students from the Central Academy of Fine Arts are also on hand to show how to make prints. They take wood with simple patterns and teach visitors how to create a woodcut.



5 Friday, January 28

Exhibition 1:1 – Wang Tianhao Solo Exhibition

Wang paints cups, magazines, cars, badges and furniture used 30 years ago to rethink the relationship between objects and time.

Where: Gaodi Gallery, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until February 28, daily except Monday, 11 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6437 7177

Movie

Tae Guk Gi: The Brotherhood of War (2004)



This epic film is about the fate of two brothers forced to

fight for South Korea in the Korean War. The elder brother, Jie-Tae, enlists in the military to protect his brother, Jin-Tae, who was a university student before the outbreak of war in 1950. As the conflict progresses, outside forces begin to tear the brothers apart.

Where: China Film Archive, 3 Wenhuiyuan Lu, Xiaoxitian, Haidian District

When: 7 pm

Admission: 20 yuan

Tel: 8229 6153

Nightlife

Heavy Metal Night

Five local heavy metal bands – Moyi, Army of Jade Kirin, Kinnara, Lose Control of Logic and Nakoma – present a heavy metal night.

Where: Mao Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 8:30 pm

Admission: 50 yuan

advance purchase, 60 yuan at the door

Tel: 6402 5080

2011 New Year Fine Art Print Festival

Where: Shin Kong Event Hall, 5/F Shin Kong Place, 87 Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until February 28, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5978 9698

6 Saturday, January 29

Movie Over the Hedge (2006)

A raccoon wakes a hibernating bear when he

tries to steal his food. The raccoon promises to collect the necessary food within a week, and as a result must climb "over the hedge" to raid humans' trash bins. There, he finds more than just food.

Where: Lady Book Saloon, 69 Chengfu Lu, Haidian District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6270 1928

Exhibition



You Are Not a Gadget

The title of this exhibition comes from a book by Jaron Lanier, who coined the term "virtual reality" in the early 1980s. This exhibition features seven artists'

works discussing the nature of the Internet.

Where: Pekin Fine Arts, 241 Caochangdi Village, Chaoyang District

When: Until February 28, daily except Monday, 9:30 am – 5:30 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5127 3220

Nightlife



The Power Powder

This Beijing-based band plays British blues-based rock.

Where: Gulou 121 Club, 121 Jiu Gulou Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 30 yuan

advance purchase, 40 yuan at the door

Tel: 8404 3430

Sunday, January 30

Movie The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance (1962)

US Senator Ransom Stoddard arrives in the lawless small town of Shinbone and vows to bring the outlaw Liberty Valance to justice, using the law – not a gun.

Where: Culture Yard, No. 10 Shique Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: 6 pm

Admission: 25 yuan, including free popcorn and soft drinks

Email: movie@cultureyard.net

Nightlife Ziyue Qiuye

Founded in 2006, this rock band is famous for criticizing social events using ironic lyrics.

Where: The One Club, Building 5, 718 Art and Culture Zone, 19 Ganluyuan, Gaobeidian Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 9:30 pm

Admission: 100 yuan advance purchase, 120 yuan at the door

Tel: 8579 2737

Exhibition On the Way – Wang Min Solo Exhibition

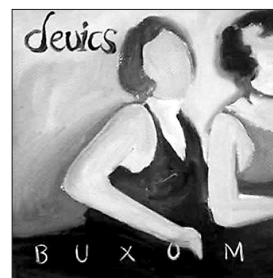
Painting daily objects, such as luggage, postcards, CDs, chess pieces and necklaces, Wang conveys to viewers the mood of being on a journey.

Where: White Space Beijing, 255 Caochangdi Village, Chaoyang District

When: Until March 2, daily except Monday, 11 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8456 2054



Upcoming

Nightlife

Bob Marley Day

DJ S-Press, O.P., Zee and MC Norrisman will perform to celebrate the birthday of Jamaican singer-songwriter Bob Marley.

Where: Yugongyishan, 3-2 Zhangzizhong Lu, Dongcheng District

When: February 6, 8 pm

Admission: 30 yuan

Tel: 6404 2711

Stage in February

Concert

Leon Fleisher Piano Recital

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: February 4, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-580 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

A Tribute to Teresa Teng

Where: Beijing Concert Hall, 1 Bei Xinhua Jie, Xicheng District

When: February 8, 7:30 pm

Admission: 100-1,080 yuan

Tel: 5166 1145

Sun Yingdi Piano Recital

Where: Multi-functional Theater of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: February 14, 7:30 pm

Admission: 200-280 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Andras Schiff Piano Recital

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: February 27, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-680 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Dance

Dance of Desire

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: February 12-14, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-380 yuan

Tel: 6551 8058

Drama

The Life Opinions of Two Dogs

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: February 12-14, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-380 yuan

Tel: 6551 8058

Out of Order

Where: Theater Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: February 19-21, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-30 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Opera

Verdi's Opera: La Traviata

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: February 13-17, 7:30 pm

Admission: 100-580 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

(By He Jianwei)

Prevent hemorrhoids with herbs

By Li Zhixin

After the Laba Rice Porridge Festival, the temperature suddenly dropped and the air went dry.

Many people have been consuming spicy food and liquor to stay warm, but both can increase one's risk of developing anal sinusitis and hemorrhoids.

Hotpot and hemorrhoids

Wang Liang, 32, a sales representative at a bank, ate hotpot nearly a dozen times during the first two weeks of the month when meeting friends and clients.

Last week, he began noticing red patches on his toilet paper.

"I thought I had eaten something bad and was worried the frequent bleeding would worsen it," he said.

He was less stressed when he was told by the doctor that it was internal hemorrhoids responsible for

the bleeding.

Internal hemorrhoids occur inside the rectum. They usually don't cause discomfort and sufferers usually can't see or feel these. Straining or irritation when passing stool can damage a hemorrhoid's surface and cause it to bleed.

"Over-indulgence of rich, greasy and spicy foods like hotpot can cause the qi of the urinary system to sink. This will make the system lose control over the muscles which causes hemorrhoids," said Li Jianping, a doctor in the pro-

tology department of Beijing Chinese Medicine Hospital.

The most common symptom of internal hemorrhoids is rectal bleeding, but the amount of blood is too small to result in anemia, he said.

Hemorrhoids can also develop from repeated straining during bowel movements when passing hard stools, being overweight or pregnant, having chronic diarrhea, prolonged sitting or standing and liver disease, which increases blood pressure in rectal veins.

Actually, hemorrhoids symptoms tend to be more noticeable with external hemorrhoids, which give sufferers the feeling that there is something in the anal region. Although pain is not usually a symptom, a hemorrhoid may swell and become achy when irritated by spicy food or blood clots.

There may also be a leakage of mucus from the anus and quite often there is irritation and itching around the area due to difficulty of keeping the area clean.

Herbs for hemorrhoids

The herbs used for hemorrhoids in Chinese medicine treat dampness or heat, harmonize qi and blood, and empty the bowels smoothly. Here are some commonly used herbs for hemorrhoids:

1. Dried persimmon

Dried persimmon is of a cold nature and tastes sweet and astringent. Dried persimmons can be used to treat fever, moisten the lungs and restrain the intestines to stop diarrhea and bleeding, making it particularly useful for those who suffer from bleeding hemorrhoids, anal fissures and dry stools. Frozen persimmons are also useful, and can be eaten after each meal.

2. Pangdahai

Pangdahai, also known as Boat Sterculia Seed, is cool in nature and tastes slightly sweet. It can treat fever, moisten the lungs, relieve sore throats, detoxify and cure stool bleeding.

Sufferers can soak several pieces of crushed Pangdahai in boiling water and add rock sugar, then drink it like tea.

3. Leek

Leeks can promote the circulation of qi and scatter blood stasis in Chinese medicine. Leeks contain crude fiber, which is passed through the digestive system to increase stool bulk and promote bowel movements.

4. Black fungus

Black fungus is neutral in nature and tastes sweet, which is good for cooling the blood and stopping bleeding. It is frequently used in treatments of bloody dysentery, hematochezia and hemorrhoids, controlling appetite, promoting good circulation and treating bruises. Sufferers can boil 30 grams of black fungus with 20 red dates over low heat and consume them once per day for 10 days.

5. Huaihua

Huaihua, also known as Sophora flower, is one of the most commonly used herbs for hemorrhoids in Chinese medicine. It can cool heat in the large intestines and control painful bleeding. Sufferers can soak 30 grams Huaihua with boiling water, add rock sugar and drink.

6. Heshouwu

Heshouwu, also known as polygonum multiflorum, can benefit the liver and kidney, nourish blood and dispel pathogenic wind. It can also relieve constipation and remove sores. As one of the herbs for hemorrhoids, taking it for a long time is especially good for those who are physically weak.

7. Banana

Bananas are commonly recommended to Chinese people with hemorrhoids. Eat one to two bananas and their peels on an empty stomach in the morning, or try peeling the bananas and steaming them with rock sugar twice a day.

8. Figs

Figs are neutral in nature and taste sweet, which can help to cool the blood and stop bleeding. Sufferers can eat several figs on an empty stomach in the morning or boil fig leaves in water and use the liquid to wash the affected area, or simply add it to your bathwater.

Besides herbs, a reasonable diet is also very important for people with hemorrhoids. "Avoid eating foods that stimulate the gastrointestinal tract and cause cramps. Eat herbs for hemorrhoids and coarse cereals, vegetables, fruit, more water and soups," Li said.

"But if you have the desire to eat a lot of vegetables and fruits, lightly cook or steam them instead of always eating them raw. Too much raw food can damage your digestion," he said.



Photo provided by 163.com

Tips

1. Keep the seat of your chair soft and padded.
2. Stay calm. Anger can aggravate hemorrhoids.
3. Don't sit or stand for prolonged durations. Exercising regularly can promote smooth bowel movements. Take short walks, stretch and wiggle your bottom to get the blood flowing through that area.
4. Squat during defecation, since the toilet seats may make it more difficult to pass the feces by compacting the anal canal.
5. Don't hold your breath through your bowel movements, try to breath and don't strain. Take your time and relax.
6. Keep your anal area clean, though one should be gentle with cleansing. Try to use chemical-free soaps such as pure olive oil soaps or baby wipes.
7. Do anal exercises. Tighten and hold sphincter or anal muscles while contracting the abdomen, do not hold your breath, and repeat as often as possible.

A Chinese New Year tradition: the temple fair

By Zhang Dongya

The celebration of Spring Festival, like so many things in Beijing, has changed over the years, but one constant remains: the temple fair. Fairs are a marketplace for people to exchange products, share traditional customs and witness cultural performances.

This year, 33 places around the city will hold temple fair activities. Visitors can immerse themselves in the atmosphere of the lunar New Year and learn more about traditional Chinese culture.

Changdian, folk custom feast

Changdian is near Liulichang, a street full of stores selling ink, paper and writing brushes. Its temple fair is a time-honored affair that can be traced back to Emperor Qianlong's reign during Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). Since it was resumed in 2001, the comparatively traditional Changdian temple fair has attracted many visitors.

A temple fair parade will proceed from Huguang Guild, once the association of Hunan and Hubei fellows, to Hepingmen.

Old customs and traditional performances will be exhibited on the street, such as acrobatics and comic talk shows. These performances were once mainstays on pedestrian overpasses in Old Beijing and now are staged in theaters.

Visitors to Changdian temple fair can get a sense of the original flavor of some of these traditional street performances, such as the "lion dance" and stilt-walking.

This year, a parade of "Chinese scholars who have passed imperial examinations" will be held in Changdian. Number One Scholars, called *zhuangyuan* in old times, will take the street in imperial costumes and imperial edicts in hand. This was a common scene hundreds of years ago.

The folk custom section will be held in Taoranting Park, south of Changdian. Visitors can have Beijing snacks like *tanghulu* – sugarcoated hawthorns on a stick



Longtan Park has been decorated with lanterns for the Spring Festival.



Some traditional ceremonies like ancient weddings will be performed at temple fairs.



Traditional crafts like tangren, or Sugar Men, will be showcased at temple fairs.

CFP Photos



– and *niangao* – sweet steamed glutinous rice pudding primarily eaten around this time. Some handicrafts like *Tu'er Ye* – the Rabbit God – shadow puppets and *tangren* – Sugar Men – will be showcased. Some folk artists will show their craftsmanship at the temple fair.

On February 5, experts will appraise and identify antiques for free.

Where: Liulichang, Xicheng District

Getting there: Take Bus 9, 66, 67, 301, 337, 608, 673 to Liulichang. Or take Subway Line 4 or Bus 40, 102, 106, 613 to Taoranting Park.

When: February 2-7, 8:30 am – 4 pm

Tel: 6315 1081

Admission: Free at Changdian, 10 yuan to enter Taoranting Park.

Beijing Grand Garden, the red mansion culture

Daguan Yuan, or the Beijing Grand Garden, was built as a set for the TV drama *A Dream of Red Mansions* in 1984. The temple fair at Grand Garden features themes and activities related to the classic.

The specialty of the Garden is a parade in ancient costumes in an archway called "Hall of Reunion." In the book, Jia Yuanchun once visited home after she became an imperial consort. The Jia family welcomed her with a grand ceremony. The parade represents this splendid occasion.

Unlike in years past, this year's fair organizers have recruited ordinary people to perform. Aside from characters like Jia Yuanchun, and his younger brother Jia Baoyu, organizers also enlisted the emperor, who accompanies the consort in her visit home.

Continued on page 21...



Visitors can get the original flavor of some traditional street performances at temple fair, such as the "lion dance" and people walking on stilts.

...continued from page 20

A Dream of Red Mansions shadow play created by young artists will be staged at the temple fair and will employ new technology.

Some classic scenes such as Grandma Liu getting drunk in the Rongguo Mansion will be included in the act.

An exhibition of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) will have 20 stalls showcasing ICH articles such as painted snuff bottles, diablo and clay figures.

Where: Beijing Grand Garden, 12 Nancaiyuan Jie, Xicheng District

Getting there: Take Bus 49, 56, 59, 122, 351, 395, 474, 721, 939 to Daguan Yuan stop.

When: February 2-7, 7:30 am - 5:30 pm

Tel: 6354 4993

Admission: 30 yuan, 25 yuan with reservation

Other notable temple fairs

Shijingshan Amusement Park, foreign temple fair

The 11th annual temple fair featuring foreign cuisine and performances will be open on the first day of the Spring Festival in Shijingshan Amusement Park.

Foreign elements will be mixed with local culture. The east section features Food Street and Shopping Street. On Food Street, visitors can try exotic foods, including British roast oysters, Norwegian cod fish strings and German roast pig, as well as traditional Beijing snacks like *baodu* - spoiled pork tripe - and *chatang*, a gruel made of millet and sugar. In the western part are parade floats and performances.

Where: Shijingshan Amusement Park, 25 Shijingshan Lu, Shijingshan District

Getting there: Take Subway Line 1 to Bajiao Youleyuan Station or Bus 337, 354, 385, 387, 621, 728, 958, 959 to Bajiao stop.

When: February 3-9, 8:30 am - 7:30 pm

Tel: 6887 4060

Admission: 10 yuan

Temple of Heaven, worshipping heaven

A heaven-worship ceremony will be held inside the park. More than 300 people will participate in the ritual, reconstructed according to paintings and literary records from Emperor Qianlong's grand ceremony in 1748. Performers will be dressed in ancient costumes and carrying props.

Where: Temple of Heaven, 7 Tiantan Nei Dongli, Dongcheng District

Getting there: Take Subway Line 5 to Tiantan Dongmen Station, or Bus 6, 34, 35, 41, 43, 60, 116, 707, 723, 807 to Tiantan Dongmen stop

When: February 3-7

Tel: 6702 8866

Admission: 10 yuan

Longtan Park, craftsmanship week

More than 10,000 red lanterns have been hanged in Longtan Park. During the weeklong temple fair, the festival will introduce a different craft each day, including cloisonne-making and carved lacquerware.

Descendants of the families famous for these traditional crafts will showcase their work and talk with visitors.

Henan Opera and Hebei Yangko, a rural folk dance, drum and gong troupe from Jiangsu Province, will also give performances.

A games competition featuring chess, Chinese chess and go will be held in the park during Spring Festival.

Where: Longtan Park, 8 Longtan Lu, Dongcheng District

Getting there: Take Bus 8, 35, 60, 561, 687, 750, 800, 957 to Longtan Gongyuan stop

When: February 2-9

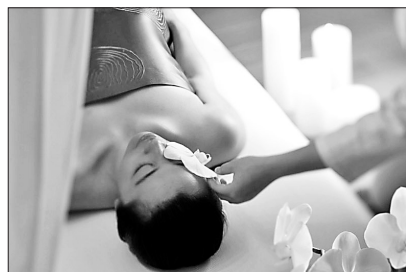
Tel: 6714 4336

Admission: 10 yuan



Hundreds of people will participate in a heaven-worship ceremony at the Temple of Heaven during Spring Festival. CFP Photos

Hotel



Spring essentials at the Hilton Spa

Restore inner balance and lift your spirit at the Spa of Hilton Beijing Wangfujing.

Indulge in a "Spring Essentials" spa package with a Rebalance Body Wrap or Traditional Chinese Therapy (90 minutes) for a special package price of 780 yuan plus gratuity (normal price 1,060 yuan) available from February 1 until April 30.

The Spa at Hilton Beijing Wangfujing is nothing short of a heaven-like escape, offering nine intimate treatment rooms, each specially designed with modern spa technologies and Vichy showers. With The Spa's signature treatments, guests are whisked away from the hubbub of life into a cocoon-like experience where treatments integrate conventional and holistic methods to pamper every need.

All treatments are harmonized with the highly sought-after skincare line from Comfort Zone. This innovative Mediterranean product combines ancient tradition with cutting-edge research to ensure long-lasting results.

Where: Hilton Beijing Wangfujing, 8 Wangfujing Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: February 1 to April 30

Tel: 5812 8888 ext. 8560

Daniel Ford named executive director at Marriott International

Marriott International has named Daniel Ford its executive director of communications for the Asia-Pacific region. This is a new position that has been developed to implement Marriott's overall communications strategy throughout the region and further establish the company's public relations support in Asia Pacific.

Ford, previously regional director of public relations for The Ritz-Carlton, will be responsible for PR and communications at all Marriott brands in the region – including Ritz-Carlton, which he will continue to oversee in addition to his new responsibilities.

"Daniel has been with the Ritz-Carlton for three years and has done a tremendous job in positioning the brand in Asia, especially in China, and raising the awareness of The Ritz-Carlton brand in the region and making it a first choice for luxury travelers in Asia," said Simon Cooper, Marriott's president and managing director, Asia-Pacific.

Ford, who has previously held key management communications positions with InterContinental Hotels and Emirates Airline, will assume the position

immediately and continue to be based in Marriott International's regional office in Hong Kong.

Sunworld Hotel Valentine's Day dinner

Sunny Cafe welcomes you and your love to have an unforgettable experience with a candlelight dinner on Valentine's Day. Two kinds of dinner menus are available. Romantic Experience includes pan-fried goose liver with apple and red wine sauce; king prawn soup; pan-fried salmon with lemon sauce; sorbet; French-baked lamb chops; and chocolate mousse. The Marvelous Memory menu includes French baked snails; pureed pumpkin soup with cream; pan-fried fish fillets with saffron sauce; sorbet; roasted beef tenderloin with red wine sauce and sacher cake.

Where: Sunworld Hotel Beijing, 88 Dengshikou Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: February 14, 6-9 pm

Cost: 398 yuan for two

Tel for reservation: 5816 8999 ext. 2430/2435



Hilton Beijing Wangfujing was honored at International Five Star Diamond Award Gala Ceremony

Hilton Beijing Wangfujing's General Manager Nils-Arme Schroeder was honored as an award recipient at the recent International Star Diamond Award Gala Ceremony hosted by the American Academy of Hospitality Sciences.

Hilton Beijing Wangfujing has been bestowed the International Five Star Diamond Award by the American Academy of Hospitality Science for three years since the chic and intimately styled hotel opened for the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics.

The International Five Star Diamond Award represents the highest and most prestigious achievement in the industry, recognized and sought by tourism and hospitality professionals worldwide.

Hilton Beijing Wangfujing was recognized for its outstanding property and exceptional hospitality, offering travelers exclusive hospitality experiences with its diverse range of amenities and attentive service.

Dining

Family dining for Chinese New Year

Experience the joyous traditions of Chinese New Year with a feast for the family at Dragon Palace. Choose from three set menus and a selection of modern seasonal dishes each meticulously sourced and selected by creative executive chef Allan Tse.

Where: Kempinski Hotel, 50 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: February 1-13

Cost: 168, 188, 268 yuan per person (15 percent gratuity)

Tel: 6465 3388 ext. 4217

Laker's lovers' Valentine special

A special Valentine's Day menu at the Laker's, including two pizzas or steaks, fries, salad and two glasses of red wine, is priced just 99 yuan. The restaurant is open through the Chinese New Year holidays.

Where: Lakers, south shore of Roma Lake, Houshayu, Shunyi District (100 meters north of the Roma traffic circle turn west)

When: Until February 14

Tel: 8041 4205

Airline



Jetstar announces direct service between Singapore and Hangzhou

Asia Pacific's largest low-fare carrier, Jetstar, announced it will commence direct services between Singapore and Hangzhou starting March 22 further extending the carrier's expansion into China.

Jetstar will commence with tri-weekly services, expanding to four flights by March 27, all carried by its Airbus A320 aircraft.

Hangzhou will become the carrier's fourth mainland service location and an important next step in the evolution of its expansion into China.

Jetstar will be the first carrier to offer direct services between Singapore and Hangzhou in Zhejiang Province.

Jetstar Asia Chief Executive Officer Chong Phit Lian joined Jetstar Group Chief Commercial Officer David Koczkar and industry and government officials in Hangzhou, including the Hangzhou Tourism Board, to make the announcement.

"Hangzhou is one of China's, if not the region's, most desirable tourism spots, and we have no doubt that our low-fare offering will inspire more and more new and repeat travelers not only from Singapore but from other parts of the Jetstar network across the Asia Pacific to visit," Chong said. "We believe this is an important economic stimulus and will benefit greater Hangzhou."

British Airways launches Business Loyalty Program

British Airways launched its On Business loyalty program in China designed to help small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) maximize their travel budgets Monday.

To celebrate the launch, as a bonus incentive, from now to March 31, all companies that enroll into British Airways' On Business loyalty program will also benefit from a special enrollment bonus of 5,000 bonus points that can be used to redeem free flights, upgrades and free hotel stays and a "triple points" offer for their first six flight sectors.

"British Airways has always been committed to helping small- and medium-sized enterprises in China," said Kevin McQuillan, British Airways' regional general manager, East Asia. "Our On Business Loyalty Program provides senior executives, CEOs and middle management at small- and medium-sized enterprises with the opportunity to enjoy excellent perks, benefits and upgrades. Launching this On Business initiative is a testament to our continued support of SMEs throughout the region."

British Airways' On Business loyalty program enables enrollees to earn reward points on every qualifying British Airways flight booked through ba.com, British Airways reservations or travel agents, irrespective of the country in which the ticket is bought.

(By Jackie Zhang)

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Wang Yu at wangyu2008@ynet.com.

Blacklist

This is a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week

Pulling one's leg but not one's weight

By Liang Meilan

Teamwork is emphasized in China's education system, as students are trained in the spirit of cooperation. Many high school courses are team-oriented. This is especially true in science classes that have lab components – specifically chemistry lab.

Chem lab is taken seriously by all high school seniors, as it's a component on final exams and the national college entrance exam.

One of the top students in Beijing Fourth Middle School and a chemistry whiz, Han Xiao, recently applied to enroll at the Chinese Academy of Science.

At the beginning of last semester, as usual, the teacher divided the class into lab teams. Han was grouped with David Gray, a newcomer from the US who is studying at an international school.

In the first couple of weeks, due to Gray's unfamiliarity with Chinese textbooks, it was Han who took charge of the experiments. Gray would only sit and watch. He sometimes asked questions, but it seemed that Han was always concentrating too hard to answer.

Week by week, sitting silently while Han did experiments, Gray grew frustrated. Without friends in the school to help, he became weary and ended up skipping lab.

Without Gray's company, Han felt more at ease. He didn't realize there was a problem until the teacher came to him and asked about Gray's absence.

"I have no idea why he isn't here,"



"But I feel uncomfortable and ashamed about doing nothing, so I dropped the subject."

"But I've done nothing wrong to your leg. Why did you say I pulled your leg?"

"I mean I'll fail the course if you're absent," Han said. "Aren't you pulling my leg?"

Gray ignored Han's misuse of the idiom, assuming that Han meant Gray wasn't "pulling his weight."

"Oh, I'm sorry," he said. "I should have noticed that the score is based on both our performances and attendance. I will talk to the teacher and ask for a leave. I don't think it'll affect our score."

"But," Gray continued, "you could have helped me by explaining the experiment process and helping me understand the textbook, since you know my Chinese is poor."

Suddenly, Han realized his arrogance and selfishness. "I'm also sorry for

not helping you," he said. "If you come to the class, I will help you from now on."

The next class, the two met just as old friends. They successfully finished a collaborative experiment and Gary regained his confidence in the subject.

Before saying goodbye, Gray told Han that, if one wants to express that someone has done something troublesome affecting his work, he should use "hinder." "Pull one's leg" is a direct translation from a Chinese phrase, tuohoutui, which is a colloquial equivalent for 'hinder,'" Gray said.

"Thank you for helping me improve my English, brother," said Han, smiling.

Han said. "But I promise that I can finish the experiment perfectly alone."

"Still, you won't pass the subject because it wasn't generated in collaboration with your partner," the teacher said. "The score the two of you get is also based on attendance. That means you will get the same score as the absentee."

Hearing that, Han was furious and called Gary right after the teacher left.

"Hey, why don't you come to class? You know that you're pulling my leg by not attending class? You know nothing about experiments. I do everything. Can't you just sit there and sleep?" he shouted.

"I apologize for that," Gray said.

Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to wangyu2008@ynet.com together with your name and address.

Keep off the Dog

By Terry Boyd-Zhang

This sign is funny. Takes a person's mind right down into the gutter. But we won't go there, will we?

Instead, we should talk about the etiquette of pet care. Those cute little puppies in the shop need to be walked about every two hours in the beginning, day and night. Poop does not actually freeze the instant it comes out of the dog. It ought to be scooped up, so pedestrians don't step in it (expat Torontonians, otherwise known in my mind as "Citizens of Dog-S---t City," take note).

Good dogs need to be socialized to both canine and humanoid persuasions. Sweet, little, adorable puppies quickly grow into big, not-so-cute dogs and live about 15 years, more or less. It should be a lifelong commitment of



walks, every day, in every season.

If you have children, you may find yourself hollering, "Get off the dog!" once or twice before both dog and children have grown. I always enjoyed lying on my friend's Irish wolfhound, a dog as big as a Shetland pony. The dog tolerated it. Bigger dogs tend to be gentle; small dogs, when frightened – as they tend to be when you lay on them – often bite first in defense, then ask questions later.

Abandoning dogs on the street leads to running packs of wild dogs. Dogs in packs are dangerous. Find someone to take the dog or dispose of it another way, harsh as that sounds.

When you see this *jinzhi liugou* sign, you are *jinzhi*, forbidden, to walk your dog (*liu*, walk; *gou*, dog) in this place. In other words: No dogs allowed.

1. Jet Li's One Foundation goes public.

Professor Zhu Shida (ZS): This sentence itself is all right. The problem lies in the fact that Jet Li's One Foundation did not "go public." It just opened to all people and became public after separating from China Red Cross. When you say a firm "goes public" or "gets listed," it means that the firm is offering its stocks or bonds for sale to the public for the first time. This is not the case with Jet Li's One Foundation. So, when we use phrases, we have to be very careful and know their exact meaning. Otherwise, we might make funny mistakes.

Terry Boyd-Zhang (TBZ): Yes, in English the phrase "going public" means that the organization is now listed on the stock market. I also have two relatively off-topic things to add, which I have been wondering about. First, what are the differences between "public" (and "society") in English and Chinese? Second, set phrases and expressions, such as four-character chengyu, are extremely important in Chinese, but we often consider such English equivalents cliché, and writing teachers require us to remove them from our essays. Why this difference in language usage?

2. Ice waterfalls

ZS: We have frozen waterfalls. I don't think it is proper to say "ice waterfalls." The problem lies in linguistic logic. As we know, ice water is water cooled with ice. It is obviously not a fall of water cooled with ice. If we say it is an iced waterfall, it may be better. Actually, there is a standard English word for it – ice fall, a mass of glacial ice occurring on a steep grade. As a matter of fact, "ice" can be used as an adjective; for instance, ice box, ice boat, ice cap. But, with waterfalls, you'd be better to say frozen or iced waterfalls.

TBZ: I think frozen waterfall is best. Iced waterfall might be okay. I think I would tend to say that the waterfall has been "iced over" (ice over top, possibly with water still falling underneath; Jasper in the wintertime). Brrr! Makes me cold just thinking about it!

3. He is deserving of both fairness and mercy.

ZS: We know "deserve" is a transitive verb. We generally say, A good worker deserves good pay. She deserves first prize. The question deserves consideration. So, when I first came across this sentence, it seemed to me that this "of" is not necessary. However, there is indeed a combination of "deserve of"; for instance, This plan is deserving of national attention. So, it is all right to say: He is deserving of both fairness and mercy.

TBZ: Perhaps he is deserving of both fairness and mercy. Perhaps some people think he deserves a "faint hope" hearing, but I believe that Joan Heimbecker's killer should stay where he is, serving a life-sentence for first-degree murder. Too bad he isn't in China; her case would have been dealt with thoroughly 15 years ago.

4. Charity stores are a recent phenomenon, having come in only three years ago.

ZS: This is a very typical example where the timing and the tense is twisted. If you say "three years ago," it never goes with a perfect tense. It only goes with the past tense. Specifically, you never say, He has come here three years ago. You will say, He has been here for three years, or He came here three years ago. In order to make the adverbial of time match with the tense, we should say, Charity stores are a recent phenomenon, having been in existence for only three years. Or, Charity stores are a recent phenomenon which came to Beijing only three years ago. Another point we should bear in mind is that when we say "three years ago," never "in three years ago."

TBZ: Having opened a charity shop only a year and a half ago, I encourage you to support local charities and other NGOs that are trying to improve the quality of life for everyone who believes one plus one is greater than two, such as Brandnu in Wudaoying Hutong (near the Lama Temple). Happy holidays and all the best in the Year of the Rabbit!

The King's Speech (2010)

Movie of the week

There's no chance of failure when a film stars the likes of Colin Firth, Geoffrey Rush and Helena Bonham Carter.

Since its debut, *The King's Speech* has been wowing both critics and viewers alike. Much as in *The Queen*, which took world film festivals by storm in 2006, director Tom Hooper adapts a story of the Royal family from moments of history.

The film is about the friendship and self-confidence gained by a king in the modern world. From costumes to cinematography, the film is worthy of its 14 nominations for this year's British Academy of Film and Television Arts awards.

Synopsis

The film tells the story of King George VI, a stutterer, and his speech therapist Lionel Logue.

Before Prince Albert, the Duke of York, can become king, he has to overcome his inability to deliver a speech in public. To help him find his confidence, his wife Elizabeth asks Logue for help. During their years of treatment, the king and the therapist became fast friends.

After years of work, the king conquers his impediment to deliver a speech that encourages Britain on Christmas at the dawn of World War II.

Scene 1

(Prince Albert has not acceded to the throne yet. To cure his stuttering, his wife Elizabeth goes to ask Logue for help using the false name of "Mrs. Johnson.")

Logue (L): Hello Mrs. Johnson, there you are. Sorry I don't have a receptionist. I like to keep things simple. "Poor and content is rich and rich enough."

Elizabeth (E): From?

L: Shakespeare. How are you?

E: How do you do.

L: Ah, traveling alone. Now, this is slightly awkward, but I'm afraid you're late.

E: Yes, I'm afraid I am.

L: Where's Mr. Johnson?

E: He doesn't know I'm here.

L: That's not a very promising start.

E: No. My husband has seen everyone to no avail (1). He's given up hope.

L: He hasn't seen me.

E: You're awfully sure of yourself.

L: I'm sure of anyone who wants to be cured.

E: Of course he wants to be cured. My husband is required to speak publicly.

L: Perhaps he should change jobs.

E: He can't.

L: Indentured servitude?

E: Something of that nature. Yes.

L: Well we need to have your hubby (2) pop by (3) ... Tuesday would be good ... He can give me his personal details and I'll make a frank appraisal. And then we can take it from there.

E: Doctor, forgive me. I do not have a "hubby." We don't "pop." And nor do we never talk about our private lives. You must come to us.

L: Sorry, Mrs. Johnson, my game, my turf, my rules. You'll have to talk it over with your husband and then you can speak to me on the telephone. Thank you very much for dropping by. Good afternoon.

Scene 2

(The Prince visits Logue for the first time.)

L: When speaking with a prince, one waits for the prince to choose the topic.

The Prince (P): Waiting for me to ... commence a conversation one can wait a rather long wait.

L: Do you know any jokes?

P: Timing isn't my strong suit (4).

L: Cup of tea?

P: No thank you.

L: I think I'll have one.

P: Aren't you going to start treating me Dr Logue?

L: Only if you're interested in being treated. Please, call me Lionel.

P: I ... I prefer Doctor.

L: I prefer Lionel. What'll I call you?

P: Your Royal Highness, then Sir after that.

L: A bit formal for here. I prefer names.

P: Prince Albert Frederick Arthur George?

L: How about Bertie?

P: Only my family uses that.

L: Perfect. In here, it's better if we're equals.

P: If we were equal ... I wouldn't be here. I'd be ... at home with my wife and no one would give a damn (5).

(The Prince takes out a cigarette.)

L: Please don't do that.

P: I'm sorry?

L: I believe sucking smoke into your lungs will kill you.

P: My physicians say it relaxes the throat.

L: They're idiots.

P: They've all been knighted.

L: Makes it official then. My "castle," my rules. Thank you. What was your earliest memory?

P: What on Earth do you mean?

L: Your first recollection.

P: I'm not ... here to discuss per-

sonal matters.

L: Why're you here then?

P: Because I bloody well stammer!

L: You have a bit of a temper.

P: One of my many faults.

L: When did the defect start?

P: I've always been this way!

L: I doubt that.

P: Don't ... tell me! It's my stammer!

L: It's my field. I assure you, no infant starts to speak with a stammer. When did it start?

P: Four or five.

L: That's typical.

P: So I've been told. I can't remember not doing it.

L: I can believe that. Do you hesitate when you think?

P: Don't be ridiculous.

L: How about when you talk to yourself? Everyone natters occasionally, Bertie.

P: Stop calling me that!

L: I'm not going to call you anything else.

P: Then we shan't speak ... how you charging for this, Doctor?

L: A fortune.

Scene 3

(The Prince becomes King George VI. Soon World War II begins, and the king is called on to speak to the country over national broadcast on Christmas.)

L: Remember, the red light will blink four times and then I'll ask them to turn it off, because we don't want that evil eye staring at you all the way through.

E: I am sure you will be splendid (6).

The King (K): Logue, however this turns out, I don't know how to thank you for what you've done.

L: Forget everything else and just say it to me. Say it to me, as a friend.

(The broadcasting starts.)

K: In this grave hour, perhaps the most fateful in our history, I send to every household of my peoples, both at home and overseas, this message spoken with the same depth of feeling for each one of you as if I were able to cross your threshold and speak to you myself.

For the second time in the lives of most of us we are at war. Over and over again we have tried to find a peaceful way out of the differences between ourselves and those who are now our enemies. But it has been in vain. We have been forced into a conflict. For we are called to meet the challenge of a principle which, if it were to prevail, would be fatal to any civilized order in the world.

Such a principle, stripped of all disguise, is surely the mere primitive doctrine that might is right. For the sake of all that we ourselves hold dear, it is unthinkable that we should refuse to meet the challenge.

It is to this high purpose that I now call my people at home and my peoples



across the seas who will make our cause their own. I ask them to stand calm and firm, and united in this time of trial. The task will be hard. There may be dark days ahead, and war can no longer be confined to the battlefield.

But we can only do the right as we see the right and reverently commit our cause to God. If one and all we keep resolutely faithful to it, then, with God's help, we shall prevail.

L: That was very good, Bertie.

Vocabulary

- 1. to no avail:** without any benefit or result
- 2. hubby:** informal word for husband
- 3. pop by:** to visit
- 4. strong suit:** one's best skill
- 5. give a damn:** to care about
- 6. splendid:** brilliant

(By Wang Yu)